African Violet MAGAZINE

Growing Gesneriads

AVSA Scholarship

Pat Hancock,
Late-blooming Hybridizer

January • February 2019 Volume 72 Number 1 avsa.org

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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 72 Number 1

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Rob's Combustible Pigeon
Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky
Exhibited by: Vicki Ferguson
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Richard Nicholas

3113 Deerfield Dr. Denton, TX 76208
Email: randanicho@aol.com

Happy New Year AVSA Friends!

By now the holidays are passing even though this column is being written during the busy fall show season. I had the pleasure of attending and judging the Missouri Valley AVC show in Tulsa in conjunction with the fall meeting of your Executive Committee. We also enjoyed the Lone Star AVC (Texas) show, which is always a lot of fun. I hope each of you has been able to get to a show this season. Whether or not you grow for show, the fellowship is worth it.

In follow-up news, the new online convention registration system worked beautifully in its test for the Lone Star show, so everyone can plan to use it for the big Houston AVSA convention. In partial response to the problem with Verizon I mentioned in the last issue, AVSA has undertaken new security measures. More information will come later. I mentioned the Nominating Committee in the last issue; in this issue you will see the results of their hard work. Special thanks to the nominees and each member who offered to serve in these important positions.

Just as the magazine went to press, we learned that sadly, Ray "Sundown" Pittman had passed away just a few days short of his 100th birthday. Ray was known for his wit and his hard work in all things violet. He was an AVSA Commercial Member and was a constant supporter of Hortense's well-known hybridizing efforts. Late in life, Ray began to hybridize *Streptocarpus* on his own, developing the "Raydar" series of multicolor streps. He served as an officer of multiple clubs and affiliates, including serving as president of the Dixie AVS. He truly will be missed.

By the time you read this, our end-of-the-year Funding Solutions fund drive will be coming to a close. This campaign initiated by our Marketing Committee intended to raise money to assist AVSA as we make a decision on the future of our office building. To summarize the situation: our building is in a declining neighborhood and needs significant improvements, or we need to sell it to find a new facility. I expect to be in Beaumont again soon to continue working with realtors. Whatever the final decision, additional funds are needed. As I write the drive has passed $15,000 and we expect more to come in. It's not too late to help!

> Whether or not you grow for show, the fellowship is worth it.

Let me end on a note of very important news. Some time ago we noted the sad news of the passing of Hans Impijn, a long-time convention regular and devoted AVSA member. Hans was a member of the Tinari Endowment Fund Legacy Society. In his recently settled will, he left a bequest to AVSA's Tinari Fund that is likely to be **the largest gift in our history to date: $164,296.17!** Once invested in the endowment fund, this wonderful, generous gift will provide perpetual budget support. Thank you, Hans!

Our future looks better each year as Violets connect us!

Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

P.O. Box 1828 Ruidoso Downs, NM 88346 editor@avsa.org

You've probably already noticed a slightly different, but much improved, look to your magazine. When talented graphic designer and AVSA member **Douglas Brull** offered his professional design services for free, we took him up on the offer. And I am so glad we did! Douglas has worked with me and the Marketing Strategy Team to update the magazine's look, while keeping the articles easy to read. He put in countless hours working and reworking the design. Thanks also to **Shirley Jones**, who has spent extra hours on this issue implementing the new style.

I am really pleased with the results and thank everyone involved. I hope you will show the new magazine to your friends, family members or others who might be interested in joining AVSA and receiving their own copy every two months. And I look forward to your feedback.

Of course, you can't beat attending local and national chapter events.

Opportunities to Learn

For our new look in this first issue of 2019, we're featuring the "other" gesneriads. I want to thank **Mel Grice** and his Gesnariad Society friends for coming through in a big way! They're introducing AVM readers to several African violet cousins in this issue, and offer comparing and contrasting care tips to help AVSA members who want to add a few new gesneriads to their African violet growing area. You are sure to learn and enjoy the information and photos.

You can learn more about growing these plants from the Gesnariad Society, and even expand your knowledge of African violet care by selecting one of several webinars, or online courses, created by Gesnariad Society members. Four courses now are available in the AVSA store. If you've never taken a webinar, have no fear. It's an easy process. Once purchased and downloaded, you can watch the presentation in the comfort of your own home and on your own schedule. That's a nice feature!

Opportunities to Share

Of course, you can't beat attending local and national chapter events. You gather lots of great information and enter or attend shows. But most of all, you get to spend time with other African violet growers. I was fortunate to attend the Lone Star African Violet Council Convention and Show in November — my first African violet show! And although I was overwhelmed by the beauty and variations of plants exhibited or for sale (uh-oh), I was most impressed with the people I met. I continue to be amazed at the dedication you all have to your plants and showing, but also to AVSA and fellow members. And then there is your expert knowledge as growers, judges or hybridizers, along with your willingness to share your expertise and plant leaves.

Most of all, I made plenty of new friends. And I truly look forward to the AVSA Annual Convention and Show next May and June in Houston. I hope to see you and your African violets there!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Tiny Tim

Exhibited by: Linda Sumski
Hybridized by: Storytella
Miniature

Which Door Do You Choose?

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York pfkroll@me.com

Now, that headline is a strange question for a horticulture magazine! Allow me to explain. Whenever I teach a Gesneriad Society judging school, the first question I ask the students is, "How many of you entered the world of gesneriads through the African violet door?" Nearly all raise their hands and smile. African violets are, after all, gesneriads! As "fanciers" of African violets, we are quickly attracted to the gesneriad family.

Family Characteristics

The gesneriad family is so vast and filled to the brim with various types of growth patterns and plants that require "down time," giving us more room on our shelves during that period of dormancy. Many of the gesneriad species and hybrids have cultural requirements similar to saintpaulia species and hybrids, so why not give them a try?

Nearly all those who dabble with a few gesneriads become infatuated with them. After all, once a plant lover, always a plant lover. Accepting the challenge of learning a few tweaks that might be necessary to grow some of the gesneriad plants is a "good thing" (with all respect to Martha Stewart). A few of the gesneriad plants might require a dome to simulate their natural habitat, while the epiphytes enjoy having their roots dry out between waterings. You soon will learn their likes and dislikes. The matriarch of my local club used to say, "Plants are like children; give them what they want, and they'll perform for you!"

Participating and Learning

I am a joiner. I have been a member of AVSA since the middle 1960s and joined the Gesneriad Society (GS) shortly after that. The GS has conventions, too! The GS convention for 2019 will take place in Cincinnati, Ohio, and promises to be another wonderful convention and show. The GS conventions also have a sales room. There are classes in the show in which you can enter your African violets as well. Come and join the fun: judging schools, workshops, lectures, tours and lots more, just like the AVSA conventions.

As "fanciers" of African violets, we are quickly attracted to the gesneriad family.

Because of the many gesneriads that are exhibited in the AVSA shows as "other gesneriads," interest continues to grow and prosper. Many African violet clubs across the nation and in Canada have expanded their interest and club names to include that they are affiliate members of both the AVSA and the GS. My local affiliate has been in existence since 1952 and changed the club's name several years ago to the African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Western New York. We hold side-by-side shows for each of the parent organizations. The schedules are written and approved with saintpaulia classes omitted from our GS show and other gesneriad classes omitted from our AVSA show. It's easy as pie! The main difference is that AVSA has merit judging and the GS has standard, competitive judging.

Perhaps these "other gesneriads" with the same cultural requirements will capture your attention and lead you into expanding your growing prowess.

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Pat Hancock — Middletown, OH

'Buckeye Kindred Spirit'
•(11117) 08/31/2018 •P. Hancock
•Semidouble-double lavender ruffledpansy/purple fantasy.
•Variegated dark green, pink and cream, glossy/red back. •Large.

'Buckeye Kosmic Storm'
•(11118) 08/31/2018 •P. Hancock
•Semidouble-double lavender ruffled pansy/purple fantasy.
•Variegated dark green, pink and cream, plain, pointed, glossy/red back. •Large.

'Buckeye Kudos'
•(11119) 08/31/2018 •P. Hancock
•Semidouble-double pink ruffled pansy/dark coral eye and rays.
•Variegated dark green, pink and cream, plain, glossy, serrated/red back. •Large.

'Jitterbug Begin the Beguine'
•(11120) 08/31/2018 •P. Hancock
•Single-semidouble pink pansy/purple fantasy.
•Variegated medium green and cream, plain, glossy, serrated. •Semiminiature.

Alcie Maxwell — Bossier City, LA

'Owlsee Pep Talk'
•(11121) 09/24/2018 •A. Maxwell
•Semidouble ruffled purple pansy.
•Medium green, ovate, quilted, ruffled. •Standard.

Marge Farrand — Ann Arbor, MI

'Mag's Volcanic Love'
•(11122) 10/20/2018 •M. Farrand
•Single-semidouble pink ruffled star/purple fantasy edge.
•Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted.•Standard.

Registration Change

•The following have been changed at the request of the hybridizers:

'It'sDeb's Dear Lady Janice'
•(11111) Change name to **ItsDeb's Dear Lady Janice**. (Delete first apostrophe.)

'Morgan's Bibighar'
•(10322) Change foliage description to "**Variegated** medium green and cream, plain, quilted, serrated."

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•September/October issue: July 1
•November/December issue: September 1

Board of Directors Nominations for 2019

Each year the Nominating Committee develops a slate of candidates for upcoming board positions. The number of nominations varies, depending on length and ending of current officers' terms. Members will vote at the National Convention in Houston, Texas, during the Annual Meeting held on Saturday, June 1, 2019. Meet our Board candidates:

Sue Ramser
Wichita Falls, Texas
President

In 1971, I was presented two African violets as a thank-you gift from a friend. Not having experience in growing African violets, I wondered how to learn about the care and feeding of these beautiful plants. A few days later, I saw a newspaper announcement for a meeting of the First African Violet Society of Wichita Falls. I attended and have been a member for 47 years. I have served as show chair, secretary, treasurer, vice president and as president nine times.

As a member of the Lone Star African Violet Council, I have served as newsletter editor twice, parliamentarian, secretary, vice president and president. I also am active in the North Texas African Violet Judges' Council, having served as parliamentarian, corresponding secretary, secretary, vice president and president twice.

I have been a member of AVSA almost as long as I've grown African violets and have served on the AVSA Classification Committee and as aide to the President for the 1988 AVSA Convention in Dallas, vice chairman of the AVSA Affiliate Committee, elected Director, AVSA sales and promotion table volunteer coordinator, secretary of the Shows and Judges Committee, chairman and vice chairman of the Policies and Procedures Committee, Treasurer, Secretary, Third Vice President, Second Vice President and First Vice President. I am an AVSA Honorary Life Member, AVSA Life Member, Master Judge, Teacher, and in 1993 compiled "Teaching Tools," which I updated with Dr. Barbara Pershing in 2013. I also surveyed judges and compiled "Comments for Judges." My past service for AVSA affords me the experience to work for the good of AVSA in the future.

I am a graduate of the University of North Texas, Denton, with a Bachelor of Business Administration. While my children were in school, I served in various local PTA offices and on the Council and District PTA as vice president, president and other offices. My other interests include genealogy, which led me to qualify for membership and offices in The Daughters of the Republic of Texas and National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Susan E. Anderson
Phoenix, Arizona
First Vice President

My passion for African violets began when I was 12 years old. A pale lavender blooming plant caught my eye at the local club's sales table at the mall. Needless to say, I took it home and my collection continued to grow every year from then on. I particularly enjoy growing variegated standard varieties such as Wranglers or Buckeyes. When it comes to shows, I truly enjoy creating designs — especially the mobiles and hanging arrangements because of their added mechanical challenges.

Since 1997, I have been a member of AVSA and a local affiliate. In 2016, Candace Baldwin and I founded the Copper State African Violet Club. We are dedicated to teaching others about the joys of growing African violets and sharing the tricks to succeeding in doing so in a desert environment.

Since joining AVSA and attending a few conventions, my involvement in AVSA has grown. As an AVSA Director, I enjoyed learning about the various committees that support the organization. I have served on several AVSA committees and currently compile the annual Tally Time report. I am a Life Member and a Senior Judge. For the past two years, I have been serving as Second Vice President.

I reside in Phoenix, Arizona, and work as an assistant state engineer for the Arizona Department of Transportation. In my free time, I enjoy photography, playing piano and traveling. Serving AVSA has afforded me the opportunity to travel and make friends throughout the nation. I look forward to continuing to promote and build AVSA for future sustainability.

Mary Corondan
Fairview, Texas
Second Vice President

I became a member of AVSA when I began growing violets in 1978. My mother gave me the membership as a birthday gift. My interest in African violets first began with my grandmother, who grew plants on a flower cart stand in the window of her sewing room. This influence and encouragement continued from my mother, who grew her violets on a plant stand under fluorescent lights. Although I grow many different sizes and varieties, the miniatures and semiminiatures are my favorites. I live in Fairview, Texas, a suburb of Dallas.

My experience with AVSA includes being the "And the Winners Are ..." columnist for the *African Violet Magazine* for the past 22 years. I have served on the Building Committee, Awards Committee, and am currently the vice chair of the Shows and Judges Committee. I have served on the AVSA Board as a Director twice and am currently serving my fourth year as Secretary. In addition to holding the office of president of the Lone Star African Violet Council for two terms, I have been the Lone Star Convention chair several times. My local AVSA affiliate is the First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas, where I have held numerous offices, including those of president and secretary. I currently am treasurer of both the North Texas African Violet Judges Council and the First Nighter AV Society. In 2017, I was honored to be the recipient of the Paula Foster Award for my service to the Lone Star African Violet Council, as well as to local clubs.

Glenda Williams
McDade, Texas
Third Vice President

It is an honor to accept this nomination to serve as AVSA Third Vice President and I appreciate your vote of confidence. I believe the special chemistry and talents of our AVSA membership and what we give back to our communities are key to keeping the AVSA strong and successful. It will be an exciting journey, meeting and working with our extended African violet family to further explore and share AVSA's rich history and culture.

I am a native Texan and African violet enthusiast living with my husband Jim on a small farm in McDade — a quaint rural community near Austin. My earliest memories are growing up playing and working in the family garden. My love of violets began in the 1970s after receiving my first plant from a sweet German grandmother, Nana Fuelberg, from Brenham, Texas. Temporary sabbaticals from the 1980s to 2005 for motherhood, aging parents, grandparenting, higher education and my professional career sidelined my African violet hobby for a few years. A surprise Mother's Day gift of a beautiful box-store violet from my daughter rekindled this love. As they say, the rest is history!

I have served AVSA as: Director (2015 to 2017), chair — AVSA Ways and Means Committee (2014 to 2018); show chair — 2019 AVSA National Convention Houston; convention co-chair — 2013 AVSA National Convention Austin; Senior Judge; and AVSA Commercial Member.

My other volunteer service to the horticulture community includes: Lone Star African Violet Council — current president, historian; First Austin African Violet Society — vice president, current historian; and Central Texas Judge's Council — current president, vice president. I have a bachelor's degree and more than 35 years of experience in information technology, specializing in strategic planning and legislative analysis in state government.

Douglas Allen
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Secretary

I grew up on a farm in Nebraska, and my career was in the automotive industry. My interest in African violets began when I met my wife, Lynn, as we worked together at a Michigan auto industry supplier. She had more than a decade of experience growing African violets, and I probably picked up the hobby to impress her. I have always been a lucky guy!

I joined AVSA in the late 1980s and began attending AVSA conventions with the Chicago Convention in 2001. Since then, we have been to every convention and developed friendships with some wonderful individuals from around the globe. We have invested a lot of time and treasure in the hobby and the payoff has been fantastic!

I had a term on the AVSA Board when Joyce Stork was President and have been on the Finance Committee for several years. Lynn and I also are members of the Town and Country and Michigan State African violet societies. We have several hundred African violets, as well as other gesneriads. We completed an addition to our home in 2009 dedicated to our hobby and host many local meetings there. We were involved with the 2012 Convention in Detroit and some of you may remember me as the host of the hospitality room on the seventieth floor of the Renaissance Center. I have experience in other nonprofit organizations as secretary and other officer roles.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as AVSA Secretary. Interacting with the other officers and Board members certainly will be rewarding. I look forward to meeting as many members as possible. If we have not met, please drop me a line or friend me on Facebook. We are always looking for new African violet ideas.

Terri Post
Elk Point, South Dakota
Treasurer

I am a CPA and have been in the accounting industry for 30 years. I currently am a partner in an accounting firm located in Elk Point, South Dakota, that specializes in governmental and nonprofit auditing, along with tax return preparation. During my entire career, I have enjoyed working with many nonprofit organizations.

I have served as the AVSA Finance Committee chair, where I have prepared AVSA financial statements, annual budgets and AVSA tax returns for the years 2009 through 2018. I also have served as show co-chairman once for AVSA and twice for the Missouri Valley African Violet Council, the affiliate where I have served, in past years, as treasurer. I also am a member of Lone Star African Violet Council.

My mother gave me my first African violet more than 40 years ago. I have always grown several violets since receiving that very first one, which I still grow. Even though the violet from my mother is a NOID, it is my favorite one in my collection. It is an honor to be nominated to serve as Treasurer for AVSA.

Stephen Covolo
Springville, California
Director

My love for African violets was cultivated by a grandmotherly neighbor who purchased two "supermarket" Optimaras for me as a gift. She then educated me on how to care for them and told me placing a penny under each pot would bring me good luck. I'm not sure the pennies helped, but I had success. They bloomed and thrived in an east windowsill, even though I potted them in 4-inch clay flower pots. I gradually learned more on my own from the "Sunset How to Grow African Violets" book, which I still own. My first mail order was placed with Volkmann Brothers Greenhouses in Texas. I just had to have the more complicated blossoms, such as Firebird. I was hooked on African violets from the age of 12 by the kindness of my neighbor, and violets have factored in my life since.

I joined the AVSA around the late 1980s or early 1990s. I started to grow for show and joined local and state clubs in Illinois. I had success showing and won my first best of show with Ode to Beauty, which I still grow. Our local and state club hosted the 2001 Chicago AVSA convention, and I was the convention show chairman. I attend conventions regularly, too.

I am a member of the Central California African Violet Society and an advanced judge. Now, the hybridizing bug has taken over. I'm busy creating, and will be registering, the "Steffano's" line of African violets and streptocarpus. My skill sets in operations and retail management, plus being trained as a professional chef, have supported me in being highly organized and creative at the same time. Growing violets and joining AVSA have led to lifelong friendships that I've developed and maintained. As a Board nominee, I'd like to give back by helping support AVSA growth and shape the future of AVSA.

Richard Craft
Las Vegas, Nevada
Director

I have lived in Las Vegas since 1970 and attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, focusing on studies in computer science and engineering. Currently, I work for an international engineering firm as a senior designer specializing in civil engineering projects.

I have served in several positions for nonprofit organizations: president, Apple (Computer) User Group; lighting director for church worship tech team; church youth leader and counselor for high school students; and director for Recovery Ministry.

I joined AVSA in 2006 shortly after I began growing African violets and a variety of gesneriads. Initially, I had little focus as to what I was growing, collecting whatever I could get my hands on and potting it up. My focus for the past two years has been to grow quality show plants and to begin an African violet hybridizing program to create new and interesting varieties.

I currently serve as the president of Glitter Gulch African Violet Growers, the AVSA affiliate club for the Las Vegas area. The club was formed in 2017 to meet the challenge of raising African violets in the hot, dry desert climate. One of the first club programs involved converting fluorescent light fixtures to LED lighting. As a result, many club members have converted over or have started using LED lighting to lower overall room temperatures and save on electricity costs.

For AVSA, I am a team member of the Library Committee, serving as a photographer and videographer. I also serve on the recently formed Marketing Committee, and am in charge of the AVSA YouTube channel. I became a student judge at the 2018 Buffalo, New York, Convention. I welcome the opportunity to serve as an AVSA Director.

Sharon Gartner
Jacksonville, Florida
Director

My interest in growing African violets began when I was 15 years old, when my grandfather got me started. I had violets on the windowsills in my bedroom until I went to college, even bringing them with me. After school, I discovered the AVSA and joined immediately. In my first issue of *African Violet Magazine*, I saw an announcement for the first meeting of a new club, Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society. I went to the meeting and joined; that was 26 years ago.

I have been the president of the club since 2014 and have held other positions, including treasurer, first vice president and show chair. After I became president, we held our first judged show in more than 15 years. I have been show chair since and am proud to say our 2018 Show had 205 total entries and grossed more than $6,500.

My business experience helped in building our mailing list to more than 500 people and our email list to more than 700. I sent invitations to give seminars to garden club circles and have done several a year for the past four years. I teach hands-on basic care, repotting and grooming to help others become violet addicts! I am now creating videos on African violet topics, posted on YouTube as "svioletlady."

My other activities include treasurer of the African Violet Council of Florida and upcoming show chair for Dixie African Violet Society next year. As an Advanced Judge, I am proud to serve when invited by clubs and affiliates and have served as a judge in Birmingham, Alabama, and Greater Atlanta. When I retired fully, I devoted all my time to my violets and my clubs.

Jill Jensen
Lincoln, Nebraska
Director

I caught the African violet "bug" at age seven from my grandmother Viola, who grew African violets. I then caught it again from Margie Jensen, my future mother-in-law, who lived in Fremont, Nebraska. After admiring Margie's violets on a Sunday visit with Dave in 1994, a gift basket with Pathfinder and Suncoast Paisley Print arrived from Kent and Joyce Stork's shop. I knew then that Dave was a "keeper," and we have been growing African violets ever since.

After growing up in Lincoln, Nebraska, I earned my bachelor's degree in education at Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska, and taught for six years. After adjudicating postrecess fusses between my third- and fourth-grade students, I decided to go to law school and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1993. I am an attorney in Lincoln, serving health care and general business clients.

I have been a member of the Lincoln African Violet Society since 1993 and have served as its treasurer, president, spring show chairman, and newsletter and yearbook editor. I was the local treasurer for the AVSA Omaha Convention in 2000. In addition, I am a member of the Missouri Valley African Violet Council and its current historian and web master. I also am a member of the Gesneriad Society. In addition to my Lincoln and Missouri Valley club offices, I have served as board president or vice president for several local nonprofit organizations.

I like to spend time with Dave and family, including the "Fab Four," the youngest of my nine grandchildren. I am an avid reader who loves to learn new things.

Mary Thompson
Paso Robles, California
Director

My mother loved plants and I have always had plants. I still have a descendant of an airplane plant she had, and there always were violets among those plants at home. In 1994, I ordered named violet leaves off the Internet. Later, a co-worker's niece came to visit her. She found out I liked violets and sent me a box of named leaves. That started my violet collection. I have more than 350 varieties and a small collection of streps, episcias and columneas.

I joined AVSA in the late 1990s after attending shows in Sacramento, where my niece lives. There I met Renee Wilson and Lola Sutherland, members of the Central California AV Society. I am a member of the Capitol City club, Central California AV Society in Fresno and a past member of the Bakersfield club. In addition, I am the secretary for the Northern California Council.

The closest club was two hours away in 2009, so I started the Central Coast African Violet Society with six people. We now have 11 members, four of whom are charter members. My goal was to become a judge, so in 2012, I took my first judging class. I have judged for several clubs in California, Oregon and the Fresno Fair, and have judged several times at the AVSA Convention. I also have helped with local entries programs and helped a vendor at their AVSA convention booth.

I was a hairdresser and salon owner for 29 years. I sold violets in my salon and eventually put in a gift shop. I now work for the State of California and am a native of Paso Robles in central California. I am honored to be considered for nomination as a national director. I hope to fulfill my position with honor, enthusiasm and dedication.

Shows and Judges

By Bill Foster

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Email: 1bpfoster@sbcglobal.net

Hello, and a happy New Year to all of you. I hope your plants have survived the neglect they are usually dealt during the holidays.

This is a reminder to all members that AVSA publishes the *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges*. Every member who grows, shows or judges should have one. The handbook is a **must** for judges and members involved in organizing and setting up a show.

Review Your Handbook

Review the book often to keep current on any changes that have been made. Pay special attention to pages 82 and 83, or the section under AVSA Judges, in case corrections have changed the page number. Be sure to pay close attention under *Fairness.* This part tells you who should not be judging the show. The judges' chair should verify that all judges are AVSA judges in good standing. If a judge neglects to bring the judge's card to the show, the judges' chair can go to avsa.org, find the *Member Content* tab, and click on *AVSA Judges list*. A list of AVSA judges is posted there and is updated regularly. Feel free to email me if there is a problem.

Please Score in Fractions

Many judges do not like to use fractions when judging collections. When a completed packet is received from an affiliate show and all the collections score the same, it causes confusion on how the best and second-best collections were determined.

AVSA rules state that the highest scoring plant is the best in show. Fractions are very important and should be used when scoring plants, especially on scores of 95 or above. The Handbook states that if two or more plants score the same and a decision cannot be reached, duplicate awards must be given. Clubs usually are not prepared to do this.

Fractions are very important and should be used when scoring plants.

Judging Collections

Collection judges should look over the entire show before they start judging the collections. Remember, there are many best-in-class plants that need to be considered when selecting best in show. Pages 90 and 91 show guidelines for selecting best-in-show plants and top award winners.

Study the duties of the show committee chairs to make sure that all chairmen have covered their jobs. And if you do not have the Handbook, get one and study it often.

Growing Love for Gesneriads

By Teresa Odle@avsa.org

Most African violet growers can name that point at which they realized they had true passion for the plants and hobby. For Terri Vicenzi, it happened on a trip to Granger Gardens in Cleveland while she was in college.

Terri already was growing orchids, begonias and other houseplants as a teenager. She soon added African violets. "I was spellbound by seeing a greenhouse filled with beautiful African violets," Terri says. For the past 10 years or so, Terri also has been growing several other gesneriads, starting with *Streptocarpus*. Success with the plants gave her confidence to try growing *Primulina, Kohleria and Aeschynanthus,* along with a few other gesneriads. "I guess you could say *Streptocarpus* was my 'gateway plant' to the larger world of gesneriads," says Terri.

Terri Vicenza with *Streptocarpus* 'Black Magic Woman,' hybridized by Nancy Block.

Terri groups her plants according to light and temperature needs.

Terri has found that with proper care, her *Streptocarpus* bloom nearly year-round. "Streps offer a seemingly endless spectrum of blossom color and size," she says. What's more, some varieties have a scent or blooms that change color as they mature. In fact, Terri, who lives in Bloomington, Indiana, has found she does not need to disbud all year, which means she can enjoy blooming plants while still growing for show.

Customizing Cultural Conditions

The secret to growing any plants from different genera in the same environment — whether they are houseplants or garden plants — lies in customizing their growing conditions just enough. Terri grows all her plants under fluorescent lights but segregates them according to their preferred light and temperature levels. "In particular, *Streptocarpus* and *Primulina* like higher light and cooler temperatures than violets, so I grow them in my basement and with much more light," says Terri.

Those conditions vary from the ones under which Terri grows other gesneriads. She says episcias, sinningias and kohlerias grow best with extra warmth and humidity. "This can be a challenge for growers in the Midwest, especially during the winter," says Terri. She currently is experimenting with growing these gesneriads under glass or in warmer areas of her home. She also says streptocarpus plants can grow very large, but several more compact varieties are in cultivation. Plus, "they can be divided easily and trimmed" if you need to limit their size, Terri advises. Through trial and error, she has had better results with her gesneriads and has become skilled at propagation so she can have a continuous supply of young plants in case one doesn't make it.

Although Terri grows African violets and gesneriads mostly for her own enjoyment, she has exhibited some plants at the Ohio State African Violet Show. And she will attend her first Gesneriad Society show and sale this

summer. When growing for show, Terri appreciates that some of the gesneriads such as primulinas and episcias are grown for their spectacular foliage, which means they can be entered in their classes for African violet or gesneriad shows without concerns about blooming.

Learning and Sharing Information

Like most African violet and gesneriad enthusiasts, Terri appreciates the need to learn as you go, and especially to learn from fellow growers. She has found helpful information on Facebook sites or groups such as Strep by Strep and African Violet Nerds. But she really credits some excellent mentors, especially Mel Grice, Pat Hancock and Dale Martens. "There is simply no substitute for spending time with other gesneriad growers, either at local club meetings or by attending shows," she says.

To that end, Terri took action to improve local sharing. "After several years of frustration over the absence of any African violet or gesneriad group in the state, I founded a club for Indiana shortly after an inspirational

Colorful streps enjoy some natural light in Terri's home.

(and first!) AVSA convention in 2015," she says. The local club currently has about 15 active members, many of whom travel quite a distance to spend time with other growers. "We meet five to six times a year, and enjoy the support of learning, sharing plant material and encouraging others to grow," Terri says.

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

***Streptocarpus* 'Bethan'**

Hybridized by: Dibleys Nurseries
Exhibited by: Terri Vicenzi

Pat Hancock, Late-blooming Hybrizier

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Pat Hancock was a bit of a late bloomer. Her first Buckeye hybrids were registered in 1997, but she was growing violets 50 years before that happened. What was she doing all that time?

Pat was born in Berea, Kentucky. Her grandmother had many kinds of houseplants, and by 1946, Grandma had Pat growing African violets. "I've often wondered how they [violets] found Berea back then," Pat says. Pat went to college in Kentucky and married her husband Tom in 1947. They had a little house with maybe six violets scattered around in different places. Her husband's aunt had a violet plant stand and a friend who grew for show. "That was the first time I'd seen a show violet," says Pat. Eventually they moved to Hamilton, Ohio, where Pat made a violet friend, who took her to visit Granger Gardens. The two played bridge and worked together to start a violet club. And then, three children came along. The intervening years were predictably busy with raising a family. Fast forward 40 years. ...

When Her Hobby Took a Turn

By the 1990s, Pat had joined a violet club in Cincinnati. She was encouraged to show in the 1992 AVSA Convention in Columbus — her first-ever show where she won an award with a Marie Burns hybrid, Carousel Lady. Her other entry was a little immature, but won a red ribbon. Pat had grown violets for 46 years, and her violet hobby was finally getting serious.

It was at this club where member David Heath gave Pat a seed pod, which got her interested in hybridizing. Pat described her first cross. "It was with a plant of David's called Peach Sundae," she recalls. "It had 22 or 23 blooms per stem. At the time I didn't think too much about it, but realize now that it had a quality that I call 'branching' — when a bloom stem goes up and several stems branch off it, increasing bloom count by a lot."

"I have Peach Sundae in my plants, twice from initial breeding, and many more times by 'line breeding.' I have only done two total out-crosses — the very first cross and one using Picasso. All my others have a Buckeye as the seed parent. My foliage is very well set because of that," Pat says.

Hybridizing Goals

It's not too hard to guess what Pat's goals are in hybridizing. She lists her goals in this order: 1) a high number of blooms per stem; 2) perfect variegated show foliage; and 3) hybrids that will win shows and are easy to grow. She will quickly discard any seedlings for an improper leaf pattern like a four-leaf clover. Pat wants to see a triangle of three leaves. She will discard any blooming seedlings that are droppers (have flowers that fall off the calyx before they wilt.) She also will discard those seedlings with foliage that is too light green. She much prefers almost black-green leaves with pink variegation.

Pat Hancock at an African violet show.

It is common for variegated violets to do best in similar climatic conditions to where they were hybridized. In other words, variegated violets bred in warm-to-hot climates tend to grow best in warm-to-hot growing spaces, while violets bred in cool conditions tend to do best for growers with cool conditions. But the Buckeye hybrids seem to grow well almost everywhere. In "Tally Time 2017" (*AVM* March 2018, pages 40 to 41), three

of her hybrids, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Buckeye Seductress and Buckeye Nostalgia, were listed as having won 22 major awards for standard-sized violets in five of the six geographic regions where AVSA shows occur. At least 16 of Pat's Buckeye varieties have won Best in Show in various AVSA shows around the country.

So, what is Pat's secret for hybridizing violets that grow well in many locations? She tests her seedlings by having several different individuals try them out before she releases them. She has test growers in Ohio, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, California, Indiana and Kentucky. Some grow for show, but others do not, and one grows in natural window light. "I also do a program where I take a flat of seedlings to a club meeting and let them pick." She and two other hybridizers test seedlings for each other at times. The test growers tell her whether they like the seedlings and she especially likes to get photos of these seedlings "to see if they are blooming true."

"One reason to have other people test seedlings is because different people use different soil, fertilizer, etc.," Pat says. "My Dayton friend uses a totally different soil mixture. All these things can cause blossom color, as well as plant growth, to be different. It is good to know how your plants react to different soils and fertilizers as well as climate."

Blooming True

Blooming true is important to Pat Hancock. She recalls that in the "old days" when AVSA was new, "hybridizers were pretty much greenhouse growers. They would plant many leaves from the same hybrid in a flat of 30 or more. If 95 percent were true, they were okay." In those days, the society maintained a committee to protest hybrids lacking adequate proof of proper testing (*AVM* June 1952, page 44.)

"I tell everyone to take bottom leaves off seedlings and plant them under the mother's leaves in the same pot — maybe three to six leaves. They should all bloom true. Most or all plants that I register have had this done more than five times. ... Like everyone, I have had plants that, due to having a mind of their own, sported. You just never know. This is a big disappointment, especially for a new grower. I try very hard to make plants that grow well for everyone."

The number of seedlings Pat has each year varies. "This year I have only done three crosses," she says. There are currently 219 Pat Hancock hybrids listed in AVSA's First Class database; 216 of those are in the "Buckeye" series, two are "Bluegrass," and one is Jitterbug Anne's Delight, which is a miniature.

When asked about the "Jitterbug" hybrids, Pat replies, "I have kept more semiminiatures for testing. All the Jitterbugs will be named after big-band songs from the 1940s and 1950s. I loved to Jitterbug back then!" The first-round name began with an "A." The second round of hybrids will have "B" names, and there will be a third round of Jitterbugs with "C" names. Three new Jitterbugs were entered in the 2018 Ohio State Show and got a lot of notice.

Registered Hybrids

Pat's criteria for choosing to register a hybrid are that the cultivar be an "easy plant to grow to show potential, and that someone has called to say they are entering it." She admits that she wishes she hadn't released so many in the early years "when they all looked wonderful," she says.

Pat with Wayne Geeslin, and his Lone Star African Violet Council 2018 Best In Show Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler. Photo credit: Lynda Welchel.

Pat is especially proud of how well Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler has done in shows and that it is being used by other hybridizers. She has won two shows herself with Buckeye Nostalgia when all she did was "take it off my shelf. That is the kind of plant you love."

Today, Pat still loves to talk violets and to offer advice. Her daughter Marti is the only one of her three children who has shown an interest in violets. Marti has helped her mother navigate the new world of the Internet so that plants from the Buckeye series can continue to find their way to new growers.

Pat Hancock doesn't think of herself as special. That's up to her, but everyone who grows knows her African violet hybrids certainly are special, and we are glad that she finally got around to hybridizing.

In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

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The column in the last issue focused on tips and ideas around transplanting new seedlings. The focus this month goes a step further, discussing several considerations in choosing seedlings, how to maximize your investment without using up all your growing space, and when to discard seedlings that are unlikely to become good plants. Although hybridizers are tempted to keep every seedling produced by a cross, the chances of getting a truly improved plant is probably less than 10 percent. Many hybridizers feel that if they get one show-worthy plant from 100 seedlings, they have been successful. It is hard to deliberately throw out seedlings before they truly have had a chance to perform, but the compost heap often is the hybridizer's best friend. It doesn't become easier with time, but you will learn to choose wisely and invest your space, time and energy into seedlings that show strong potential for becoming "keepers" and worthy of the "happy hybridizer's dance."

Any plant that shows variegation early will certainly have a high chance for strong variegation later.

Q: How do you decide which seedlings to transplant?

A: There is always a temptation to transplant every seedling produced from a cross. The seedling you don't transplant could be that "perfect" plant and you don't want to miss the chance. However, many crosses will produce several look-alike plants, so generally there is no need to grow out all of them. One method I've often used is to try to pick seedlings at random from the germination dish. This is a good method when I'm not entirely sure what a cross will produce and I want to get a representative sample of the seedlings. If I have space, I try to pick out about 15 to 20 seedlings to get a good cross-section.

If my goal in the cross is for smaller plants, I might deliberately try to pick out smaller seedlings. This method won't guarantee miniatures or even semi-miniature plants, but it certainly can help increase your chances for smaller plants. Conversely, if my goal is large standard plants, picking out the largest, most robust seedlings should increase the odds of achieving this goal. If my goal in the cross involves a type of foliage characteristic such as ruffled, wavy, longifolia or quilted foliage, I might need to let the seedlings produce a few true leaves before picking which ones to transplant. These leaf characteristics won't be fully expressed in young seedlings, but close examination should allow the identification of plants that will produce these types of foliage.

As mentioned in the last column, variegated foliage often shows up very early in the seedlings. If variegation was your goal, you should be able to select seedlings for this trait. Any plant that shows variegation early will certainly have a high chance for strong variegation later.

One last trait to mention is the red-backed leaf trait. This shows up early in seedlings. Plants with the red-backed foliage often look darker green compared to those without the trait. Red-backed plants often produce darker flower colors, so you can sometimes select for flower color as well. Of course, if your goal is for lighter green foliage and lighter flower colors, select the seedlings

that show these traits. You might not get a mixture of seedlings with and without red-leaf backing, but many crosses will show both types of offspring, giving you some variety in choice.

Q: How long can seedlings remain in the germination dish before transplanting?

A: African violet seedlings are surprisingly flexible on their transplantation times. I often select 15 to 20 seedlings to transplant as soon as they are large enough to handle. The remaining seedlings are left under their dome or cover. Don't fertilize, as this encourages algae growth; the algae will overgrow the remaining seedlings. Often, you can grow the first transplants to blooming size while the remaining seedlings wait. If you get nothing spectacular from the first group of seedlings, it's probably safe to toss the remaining seedlings. The odds of getting something better in other seedlings from this cross are probably very small. If, however, several of the first seedlings show good promise, discard the weakest growers and transplant up another round of babies from the germination dish. Depending on your growing space and interest, you can often do several rounds of transplanting, growing out and evaluating seedlings while keeping the extra seedlings on hold in the original germination dish.

Q: When should you start discarding seedlings?

A: The timing for discarding seedlings probably depends on your hybridization goal. If you want plants with good foliage, you might discard any seedlings that show unruly foliage. Leaves that don't lay flat, have abnormalities, or grow crookedly are unlikely to correct their growth forms as they get larger. If the abnormal growth was due to overcrowding because the plants were not transplanted until late, give them a chance to try to grow out before choosing those to discard. Many hybridizers are so focused on the quality of the foliage that they discard some seedlings for bad foliage traits before they ever get to blooming size.

If you are willing to take risks on plants with less than perfect foliage, wait until flowers appear before considering which to discard. Plants with flowers that drop, don't open fully or show other growth abnormalities can generally be discarded. Plants that have weak bloom stems that don't support the flowers well often are discarded by many hybridizers. Plants with nondescript flowers that are not an improvement on or different from other plants should also be considered for discarding. Here again, consider your goals. If the seedlings are not performing up to expectations, many can be discarded.

Q: What about seedlings that tend to sucker? Is there any point in keeping them?

A: Seedlings that sucker sometimes are tough to evaluate. If there are trailers in your cross, suckers might be the sign of a self-branching growth habit that is often desirable in a new trailer. In these cases, sucker production might be a trait to select for. If, however, the parents are not trailers and your goal is single rosette-style plants, suckering can be a real problem. Plants can inherit a strong tendency to sucker and no amount of pruning will eliminate the trait. Plants that behave this way should probably be discarded. Having said this, do consider your growing conditions and whether the seedlings have been stressed in any way. Stress often causes seedlings to sucker. Giving these seedlings proper grooming and growing conditions can produce normal, and even spectacular, plants. If in doubt, grow it out a little further before deciding to discard.

Often, you can grow the first transplants to blooming size while the remaining seedlings wait.

Q: Is there any value in transplanting and growing out any of the "weird" seedlings that sometimes appear in a germination dish?

A: There are those of us in the hybridizing world who really value the weird and unusual. I often would give some growing space to an unusual appearing plant or two just to see what they grow up to be. In most cases, "weird" meant some undesirable trait and these seedlings were discarded quickly. In other cases, weird tuned out to be something interesting and possibly worth keeping for future breeding purposes. Keeping a weird seedling probably is a personal decision and based on the interests of the hybridizer.

Coming Events

January 26 — Colorado
Rocky Mountain Streptocarpus Society
Annual Show and Sale
Tagawa Gardens
7711 South Parker Rd.
Centennial, CO
9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Trudy Brekel: violetlady7@msm.com
(303) 452-9015

February 16 — Arizona
Desert Sun AV and Gesneriad Society
Annual Display and Sale (Public Free)
Phoenix Valley Garden Center
1809 N. 15th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85007
9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Karen Broadway: karensavon@cox.net

February 22–23, 2019 — Florida
Tampa African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Common Ground Christian Church
4207 North Boulevard
Tampa FL 33603
Friday: noon–5 p.m. Sale 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Sale 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Mary Lou Harden: (813) 689-8700; (813) 924-2686
Lynn Bandy: (813) 681-8458; (813) 305-9236
www.tampaafricanviolets.com

March 1–3 — Central California
Central California African Violet Society
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Home and Garden Show of Fresno
Fresno Fair Grounds
1121 S. Chance
Fresno Ca 93702
Entrance Fee to Home and Garden Show
$10, Adults; $5, Seniors
Friday: 11 a.m.–7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.–7 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Teri Watkins: (559) 260-9233
watkins2176@sbcglobal.net

March 9 — California
South Coast AVS
Judged Show/Sale
South Coast Botanic Garden
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA
11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Culture class 10:30 a.m.
Jacquie Eisenhut: (310) 325-2993
jaceis905@gmail.com

March 16 — Texas
First Austin African Violet Society
Spring Plant Display and Sale
Austin Area Garden Center
Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746
Saturday, March 16: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Sale, repotting demonstration
Entry Zilker Botanical Garden: $1–$3
Susan Kautz: (512) 365-1818
gizzmo@austin.rr.com
www.faavs.org

March 23–24 — Illinois
10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. both days
Chicago Botanic Garden
1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, IL
Susan Bradford: asusan.bradford@abbvie.com

March 29–30 — Florida
Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society
Annual Judged Show and Sale, Public
San Jose Church of Christ
6233 San Jose Blvd
Jacksonville, FL 32217
Friday: noon–5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Sharon Gartner: svioletlady@yahoo.com
jacksonvilleviolets.org

March 29–30 — Texas
Dallas Metro African Violet Society
Mini-show and spring sale
North Haven Gardens
7700 Northaven
Dallas, TX 75230
10 a.m.–4 p.m. daily
Workshops 10 a.m.–2 p.m. daily
Public invited, no charge
Bill Foster: 1bpfoster@sbcglobal.net
Sylvia Leeds: roseotx@gmail.com
Barbara Kelly: violetgirl6771@sbcglobal.net

April 13–14 — Ohio
Columbus African Violet Society
Annual Show and Sale; Free
Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
1777 East Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43203
Saturday: Show noon–5 p.m. Sale 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday Show/Sale 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Madelyn Sechler: mjsechler@gmail.com
Donna Vogelpohl: donnav8452@columbus.rr.com
ColumbusAfricanVioletSociety.org

April 14 — Ontario
Toronto African Violet and Gesneriad Society
Annual Show and Sale (Public)
Toronto Botanical Garden
Floral Hall
777 Lawrence Avenue East
Toronto (North York), Ontario M3C 1P2
9 a.m.–4 p.m.

April 20–21 — New Mexico
Albuquerque African Violet Club
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Albuquerque Garden Center
10120 Lomas Blvd.
Albuquerque, NM 87112
Saturday: 2 p.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Sharon Shannon: sshannon2@swcp.com
(505) 865-0171
AlbuquerqueAfricanVioletClub.org

April 27 — Ontario
Lakeshore African Violet Society
Annual Show and Sale (Public)
St. Philip's Lutheran Church
61 West Deane Park Drive
Etobicoke, Ontario M9B 2S1
9 a.m.–4 p.m.
http://www.lakeshoreavs.com

In Memory

Mary Mahen

Mary Mahen was in the Amethyst and Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Council for many decades. She loved to host luncheon meetings at her home and show the members her beautiful outdoor vegetable and flower gardens. It has been said that Mary never met a violet leaf that she didn't want to plant.

Ruth Bann

Our Rebel leader has departed. On November 15, 2018, the AVSA family lost a great friend and champion. Ruth Bann, an avid African violet collector and hybridizer, passed away peacefully. Right now, she is probably looking down saying, "Please don't embarrass me with a long and mushy remembrance." Sorry, Ruth; we have to because you deserve it.

Ruth was a feisty gal who brought fun and sparkle to every meeting and show she attended. She is best known for the "Rebel's" African violets such as Rebel's Splatter Kake, Rebel's Night Breezes, Rebel's Ambrosia, Rebel's Dahlonega, Rebel's Snowy Bright and many, many others. She participated in many club activities, shows and conventions, and made many friends world-wide through her love of African violets. Ruth was a lifetime member of AVSA and Minnesota and North Star clubs, and a mentor to many growers.

All the shelves that held her hundreds, if not thousands, of African violets now are empty, quiet and dark. But her family and friends know that her legacy will live on through the AVSA family who collect, show and sell her beloved Rebel's African violets. We will miss her smiling face and laughter.

Family Portrait — *Strepcarpus* 'Crystal Ice'

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. Englewood, CO
Email: melsgrice@earthlink.net

Streptocarpus 'Crystal Ice' is an example of one of my favorite gesneriads. This outstanding variety comes to us from Dibleys Nurseries in North Wales, United Kingdom. It has blue veins over white flowers. This medium-sized plant has attractive narrow leaves, with each flower stem usually producing between seven and 13 flowers. *S.* 'Crystal Ice' also flowers year-round and is not a seasonal bloomer like some streptocarpus hybrids.

The spectacular plant in the photo on the next page was exhibited by John deSaavedra at the Ohio State African Violet Flower Show last fall. The plant won the award for Best Gesneriad and Best *Streptocarpus*. Not bad for someone entering a show for the first time! Keep up the good work, John!

Care and Conditions

Streptocarpus hybrids thrive in conditions similar to those of African violets. However, there are some differences. For example, streptocarpuses need more light to flower well. Two T-8 tubes or LEDs placed a little bit higher above the plants work well for me. Seeing pale, bleached leaves means the plants are probably getting too much light if there is no nutrition problem. Streptocarpuses can tolerate much cooler temperatures than African violets, but they grow and flower best at room temperature. The plants suffer when temperatures exceed 80 degrees F, just like African violets.

Water and Nutrition Needs

Streptocarpus hybrids like to be fed with a commercial water-soluble fertilizer at the rate of one-eighth teaspoon per gallon of water every time you water. I use reverse-osmosis water to avoid the buildup of salts in the potting mix. Many expert growers water their streptocarpus plants by hand — making sure to pour off any excess water not absorbed by the plant that remains in the saucer. Streptocarpuses do not grow in swamp-like conditions; they like to dry out a bit, but not completely, between watering. If your *Streptocarpus* get too dry, the leaves will wilt. They will revive when you water them, but if this happens several times, you will see damage (brown spots) on the leaves.

I travel so much throughout the year that I have to wick-water most of my plants if they are to survive my absences. I use a very open potting mix (PRO-MIX HP) with a lot of perlite (about 50 percent) added to it. This allows for good air circulation at the roots. Streptocarpus hybrids like to be potted high up in the pot so the crown of leaves does not sit in water. Basically, make a "moat" around the crown. Repot your plants often with fresh potting mix and they will reward you. Unfortunately, I seldom get around to this as often as I should. But when I do, I am rewarded with a wealth of showy blooms.

I am thrilled to announce that Lynne Dibley from Dibleys Nurseries (http://dibleys.com) will be one of the featured speakers at the 2019 Gesneriad Society Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, this July. In 2018, Dibleys won their 29th Chelsea Gold Medal, which makes well over a total 150 RHS Gold Medals for their plants. Dibley's *S.* 'Harlequin Blue' was named as the RHS Chelsea Plant of the Decade (2003 to 2012) and *S.* 'Polka-Dot Purple' came in second in the 2015 RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year award. I can't wait to see what new hybrids Lynne Dibley will have to show us!

The plants suffer when temperatures exceed 80°F, just like African violets.

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

***Streptocarpus* 'Crystal Ice'**

Exhibited by: John deSaavedra

Mistakes Made Along the Way

By Pam Orris Wilmington, Delaware

I have been growing gesneriads for more than 14 years. I began with African violets and over the past 5 years, I added *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus* to my growing experience.

In the beginning, not every African violet I touched grew the way I expected it to grow, or the way it should have grown after checking multiple sources. I tried every fertilizer, soil mix, chemical preventive or treatment available. But still, the plants didn't grow properly and eventually went to African violet heaven.

After much frustration and disappointment, I decided to stop growing African violets and turned my growing curiosity to *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus*. Maybe, just maybe, they would grow for me. And grow they did, but only after I put a halt to all the growing insanity I had felt before. The one detail I had forgotten was to use my own common sense and ***to keep things simple.***

Since relaxing and simplifying my growing, I now grow attractive and eye-pleasing *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus*. Recently, I successfully reintroduced African violets into my collection. To my surprise, they are growing quite well. Again, I continue to keep my common sense at the forefront and keep things simple.

Here are some points I've found helpful to keep in mind along the way to good growing:

Common Sense "Do" List

•Use Physan when grooming; it's a grower's best friend. I keep a cup filled with the solution on my potting bench. Every time I use any tools to groom a plant, the tools go into the Physan solution before moving on to the next plant. I believe this practice has stopped the spread of some nasty plant viruses from one plant in my collection to another. It also is a visual reminder to check my trays for cleaning and wipe them down with the solution when necessary.

Since relaxing and simplifying my growing, I now grow attractive and eye-pleasing *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus.*

•Mind pH. I keep the pH of my water between 6.5 and 6.7. No science degree is necessary; you can buy a simple pH kit to check the pH level and adjust the pH up or down. If you use tap water, add a solution to remove chloramines and chloride. You can purchase these solutions in the fish section at your local pet store.

•Groom the plants at the same time you water the collection.

•Repot as needed but start with a basic soil mix and an all-purpose fertilizer. Miracle-Gro African Violet potting mix and Optimara Violet Food NPK 14-12-14 have worked for me. I add additional perlite to lighten the soil. After trying other soil mixes and fertilizers I never achieved the desired result, so I've returned to these two basics and continue to keep it simple.

•Know what shelf level and shelf position your plants prefer. This will take close observation and patience. Temperature and light matter. Some plants prefer warmer temperatures on the top shelves and others prefer it cooler on the bottom shelf. Remember to turn your plants often to prevent the plants from growing in one direction.

•Keep trays and Oyama pot reservoirs clean. Dirty trays take away from the beauty of your plants and help support insects. Since I use Oyama pots, keeping the reservoirs clean prevents algae and pests.

•Throw out a plant if it has a serious growing or insect problem. Remember, there is always another plant to replace it in your collection. This is a hard point to learn, especially if you have had the plant for many years. I don't save leaves from a problem plant for fear of spreading the problem to the rest of my collection. I isolate all new plants after repotting and spraying with insecticide. I've found between six and eight weeks of isolation works well.

Common Sense "Don't" List

•Keep a large collection. Instead, keep only what you can care for. If the plants are crowded on the shelves, they can't grow to the best of their ability.

•Keep too many leaves for propagating new plants — unless you have the growing space.

•Keep multiples of one plant. Share the extra plant with another grower in your club so you have a source for a replacement leaf if you lose your plant. Or better yet, give the plant to someone who enjoys flowers. You never know; it could lead to recruiting a future club member.

•Be afraid to remove leaves from the plant for symmetry. If you don't remove leaves, how will you learn the art of symmetry? Practice makes perfect to get that best in class or best in show. Use one plant for practice. Take the chance and eventually you will get it. Your plants will reward you and you will have the pleasure of displaying beautiful plants at home or in a show.

•Expect to get best in show quickly. It takes time! I'm still working on this; but you can win blue ribbons or best in class along the way.

Yes, I still make mistakes with my plants, but the mistake usually is one I've noted above. New growers can learn from my past mistakes as they begin to create their own gesneriad collections. I hope these tips will help you to become a better grower and avoid the same mistakes I made along the way. But the most important point is to make this hobby fun and not look at growing gesneriads as a chore.

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer

256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. Pennington, NJ 08534
September to October 2018 Total $365

Multicolor – $50-$99

Julie Goss
Ohio State African Violet Society
In memory of John Cook
Ohio State African Violet Society
In memory of Richard Carr
Ohio State African Violet Society
In memory of Ann Thomas
Missouri Valley African Violet Council
In memory of Mary Jo Bradley, Doris Brown, Marion Hamtil, Miriam Greene and Doris Carson

Two-tone – $25-$49

Magic Knight African Violet Society
In lieu of speaker's fee for Vickie Crider
Crosstown African Violet Club

Thumbprint – Under $25

Barbara L. Robison
Kris Johnson
Lindsay Leonidas
JoAnne D'Angelo
Gail Podany

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Aly's Rosy Baby

Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme
Hybridized by: A. Droege
Semiminiature Trailer

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

Primulina sclerophylla

Exhibited by: Beverley Williams

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Columnea microphylla

Exhibited by: Beverley Williams

Chain Gang

Exhibited by: Mel Grice

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Growing Achimenes

By Julie Mavity-Hudson Joelton, Tennessee

Growing *Achimenes* is both easy and rewarding. The plants have many advantages. For example, they can be grown outside in the summer and go dormant in the winter, so they don't take up valuable space in the light garden, window or greenhouse. They are bright and pretty and make a good display on a porch or under a tree. In addition, *Achimenes* can be grown under lights or in a bright window if preferred.

About *Achimenes*

Achimenes are grown from scaly rhizomes, which are modified stems and leaves that form in the fall and remain dormant for several months. In the spring when they begin sprouting, the rhizomes should be laid flat and covered with one-fourth to one-half inch of soil. Four to eight rhizomes in a five- to eight-inch pot make a good display, but larger pots and more rhizomes also are excellent. The potting mix should be one that won't dry out too fast — any commercial mix such as Metro-mix, Promix or Fafard will work.

Award-winning *Achimenes* 'Sauline' exhibited by Ron Myhr.

Once planted, they must not be allowed to dry out. Place achimenes plants outside once the weather warms and there is no chance of frost. In northern climates, they can be started indoors. It does not hurt, though, to wait to plant them, even when the sprouts they are making are getting quite long. The sprout can be covered with soil mix. The plants should be placed where they will receive good light but not too much sun. Morning sun is fine, though. Once they get a few pairs of leaves they should be pinched to promote bushier plants.

Julie's *Achimenes* 'Petite Fadette'.

Blooming and Propagating

In the fall the plants gradually stop blooming and will begin to look ratty. When the plants are mostly dormant, you can place the pots in cardboard boxes, even in several layers, and bring them in from outside. They can be kept in a closet or spare bathroom, or anywhere they will be out of the way. In very dry climates a tiny bit of water can be splashed on them once or twice, but in more humid climates, do not add any water while they are dormant.

The rhizomes can be harvested any time, but it usually is better to wait until the foliage is completely dead and the pots have dried out completely. I have found I get

more rhizomes if I wait until at least February. By then the soil is completely dry and the rhizomes are less likely to rot in their baggies. I have had some problems with mold when holding them for long periods of time, so adding some dry perlite to the bags might be helpful. In general, though, I wait until I am ready to replant before I harvest, and only bag up the rhizomes to share with others. In fact, the plants do fine when only harvested every second or third year.

Growing under lights is quite successful as well. *Achimenes* needs more light than African violets, and a four-tube T8 fixture is used by many, as are LED fixtures. They also can be grown in a very bright window. Wick watering, capillary matting or self-watering pots work quite well. A standard light wicking mix (generally at least half perlite) should be used. Pinching is especially important under lights because it helps keep the plants compact. The plants still go dormant under lights and must be dried off and allowed to maintain dormancy until they begin to sprout.

Achimenes comes in many colors and sizes of flowers and has a wide variety of leaf and plant sizes as well. There is an *Achimenes* for every taste. This is truly a genus worth growing.

Join us in Cincinnati in 2019!

The 63rd Annual Convention of The Gesneriad Society
July 1 to July 6, 2019

Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza Hotel
35 W. 5th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Plant Sales open: Friday, July 5 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Flower Show open: Friday, July 5 - 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Flower Show and Plant Sales open: July 6 - 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For additional information, contact Mel Grice at
melsgrice@earthlink.net

www.gesneriadsociety.org

And the Winners Are . . .

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way Fairview, TX 75069
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVS of Philadelphia, PA—Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress, Cajun's Ma Cher Amie, LiK-Tanets Flamingo; Best in Show/Best Species: S. 5h clone *rupicolus*; Best Standard: LiK-Tanets Flamingo; Best Miniature: Hunter's Pink Camo; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Karen Durzuweit**

•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: East Wind, Bob Serbin, Donna's Stardust, **Mark Griffith**

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Frosty Bubbles, Ness' Angel Glitter, Jolly Jan; Best Species Collection: S. 5c1 clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397, S. 5g clone *pendulus* var. *kizarae*, S. 5i clone *velutinus*; Best Semiminiature: Mesmerizing Pink; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Stephanie Griffith**

•Best Gesneriad: *Smithiantha* cbs hybrid, **Elizabeth Gottshall**.

Central Arkansas AVS, AR—Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Blue Indigo, Buckeye Seductress, Jersey Snow Flakes; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Deer Trail; Best Miniature: Granger's Mexicali Rose, **Alice Brown**

•2nd AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Buckeye Nostalgia, Hot Tamales; Best Semiminiature: Dean's Trinket; Best Species: S. 5c1 clone Sigi Falls; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia eumorpha x glazioviana*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kim Holbert**

•Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, **Glenda Robertson**

•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Danny Tidwell**.

Missouri Valley AV Council, MO—Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Coujon, Cajun's Fair Maiden, Buckeye Nostalgia; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Sassy Sister, Rob's Denim Demon, Jolly Frills; Best in Show/Best Standard: Cajun's Coujon; Best Miniature: Rob's Denim Demon; Best Trailer: Pink Star Lou; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol Rice**

•Best Semiminiature: Optimara Little Oneida; Best Species: S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, **Linda Sumski**

•Best Gesneriad: *Gasteranthus atratus*, **Linda Hall**

•Best Design, **Fran Russom**

•Design Sweepstakes, **Randy Deutsch**.

North Star AV Council, MN—Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Poltergeist, Cajun's Hill Be Blue, Cajun's Fair Maiden; Best in Show/Best Standard: Carolina Elegant Affair, **Gail Podany**

•Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Midget', Best Species: S. 5i clone *velutinus*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol Semrau**

•Best Semiminiature: Ness' Cranberry Swirl; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Patricia Kono**

•Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail, **Mary Kealy-Falk**

•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Werness**.

Ohio State AVS, OH—Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Mindi Brooke, Buckeye Summer Song, Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jersey Sugar Plums, Cajun's Lil Joy, Jazz Bouquet; Best AVSA Species Collection: S. 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker, S. 5a clone *grandifolius* No. 237, S. *ionanthus* ssp. *ionanthus* v. *ionanthus*; Best Standard: Buckeye Summer Song; Best Semiminiature: Cajun's Lil Joy; Best Species: S. 5a clone *grandifolius* No. 237, **Debbie McInnis**

•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Pepper, Thunder Surprise, Mac's Callow Fellow, **Stephanie Newman**

•Best Miniature: Frosted Denim; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Crystal Ice', **John de Saavedra**

•Best Trailer: RS-Zimni Tsvetok, **Paul Sorano**.

Growing Episcias in Drier Climates

By Leonard Re Fountain Valley, California

Episcia can be grown successfully in drier climates. I live in southern California, which has a semi-arid climate. I'm about five miles inland from the Pacific Ocean with a temperature range of 60 to 80 degrees F most of the year; we average about 30 to 40 percent humidity. The main exception occurs during October and November when the winds reverse and blow from the desert to the ocean. During this time, the temperatures increase to the 90s and the humidity drops to about 10 to 15 percent.

Caring for Episcias

I grow all my episcia plants uncovered except for the pink-leaved ones such as *E.* 'Unpredictable Helen', *E.* 'Unpredictable Valley' and *E.* 'Cleopatra'. However, I grow *E.* 'Pink Smoke' uncovered and it does great. I use my standard African violet mix (peat moss, vermiculite and perlite 1-1-1) with a little dolomite lime and charcoal. I use the same fertilizers that are used on my African violets. This is a rotation of Dyna-Gro — one-half teaspoon to a gallon of water; Jack's Blossom Booster (10/30/10) — one-fourth teaspoon to a gallon of water; Eleanor's VF-11 — four capfuls to a gallon of water; and Urea-Free Orchid fertilizer (20/10/20) — one-fourth teaspoon to a gallon of water. I use distilled water, adding 10 drops of pH Up per gallon.

Lighting

All episcia plants are grown either under a four-tube T-12 fixture (using cool whites) or right next to the light stand on individual TV trays. They all receive an early morning misting with the distilled water (including the pH Up additive, but no fertilizer). I like to start my episcia plants by planting three sturdy stolons into an Oyama pot. After they are established and have developed about three additional stolons on each original stolon, I transplant them into a large 6-inch pan pot using two wicks for proper water absorption. By removing the extra stolons (beyond three or four) and the flowers, I have larger foliage with better coloration. I certainly enjoy growing episcias and especially love those developed by Thad Scaggs and Betty Cessena.

Episcia 'Pink Smoke'

You can find great photos of and information about growing *Episcia* and other gesneriads by going to the Gesneriad Reference Web at www.gesneriads.info. There also will be many episcias and rare gesneriads for sale at the Gesneriad Society 2019 Convention plant sales in Cincinnati, Ohio, July 1 through July 6, 2019. See you there!

AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson Affiliate Chair

1640 N. Kelly Pl. Tucson, AZ 85715
Email: twajda1@comcast.net

Last year seems to have gone by so fast, and I have a feeling that 2019 will be the same. There just never seems to be enough time go get everything on our "to do" list done. One item for your affiliate's list is to make sure your club's information is current. Go to www.AVSA.org and in the left menu, click on *Local Clubs*. Next, select the region (lower left) that contains your state or country, then review your club's information from the link. If the information needs to be updated, please take the time to input the new information via the AVSA website. The local club update link is on the Local Club main page.

Event Information

For event information, select *Events* from the top left menu and see the *Add Event* box on the lower left. We have improved the event entry system so the event information now is sent directly to the Affiliate Chair and to the AVM editor. Your online event entry will still have to meet the magazine deadlines for coming events to make it into the next issue of the magazine.

Awards

The November-December issue of the AVM had a wonderful article by Susan Hill, our Awards Chair, describing all of the AVSA awards. The Hudson Memorial Award is for excellence in affiliate leadership. If you have someone in your club who goes the extra mile to keep your club active and interesting, you might consider looking into this award next year.

New Clubs

Two new clubs have joined AVSA:

•Rocky Mountain Streptocarpus Society meets in Westminster, Colorado

•Yuma Orchid and African Violet Society meets in Yuma, Arizona

We have a long list of members working to start a club:

•Laura Carpenter, Lancaster, CA: ronandkatiew@sbcglobal.net

•Donna Juergenson, Pueblo, CO: djuergenson2@gmail.com

•Mary Ann Markey, Port Charlotte, FL: drmogrady@gmail.com

•John Geiser, Grand Rapids, MI: johnrgeiser@gmail.com

•Susan Jacques, Marquette, MI: susan@robertjacques.com

•Joanne Hawks, Greensboro, NCl: johawks21@gmail.com

•Martha Cranford, Raleigh, NC: mcranford@nc.rr.com

•Mary Ann McNeill, Washington, NC: mcneill70@suddenlink.net

•Shawna Adams, Whitter, NC: snadaminc@aol.com

•Tina Moreno, Charlotte, NC: gecko2t@gmail.com

•Vikki Ivey, Greenville, SC: vivey@att.net

•Sheila Black, Roanoke, VA: sheilablack@cox.net

•Alice Person, Madison, WI: peters56@tds.net

•Jennie Lawrence, Laramie, WY: missjeannae@ yahoo.com

We have a long list of members working to start a club.

Hopefully, many of you know someone interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact the Affiliate Chair for help. Several states do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Annabelle

Exhibited by: Susan Joy
Hybridized by: K. Stork
Large Standard

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Cajun's Joker Wild

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux
Standard

Technically Speaking ... or Not: Emergency Repotting

By Neil Lipson

Phone: (610) 356-6183
Email: ndlipson@gmail.com

It happens. There's always one plant hidden in the back of your collection that just didn't get enough water or was buried behind others and ignored. It wasn't intentional, but is a common problem when you don't have enough room to separate the plants well enough, and especially when you have way too many plants! This happens to me all the time, usually when I'm distracted with other matters in life. Here's what to do:

Check the Roots

First, pull the neglected plant out of the pot and examine the roots. Check for mealy bugs, which target stressed plants that can't "fend" for themselves. Scrape the bark from the stem to make sure it hasn't dried from the roots up to the crown. That happens way too often, and you don't know it's occurring. When it does, the first symptom is that the plant is limp but the soil is moist.

If you find the violet has a lower dried-up portion of stem, see how high it has traveled. I have had to cut off the top quarter inch of a stem and had two inches of dead stem. By another week or so, the entire plant would have been done. Frequently, when a plant is limp, even when the soil is moist, I'll pull it out and check for rot, dried stem and soil mealies. There are times when none of these are present, so I just repot it in fresh soil and keep an eye on it. It could be Pythium (water mold) or Rhizoctonia fungus, which causes infection, but that is uncommon.

Look for Root Rot

Root rot, however, requires a different technique. Get a scalpel or X-ACTO knife and start cutting from the bottom up. Look for any sign of rot, and continue cutting until you see a nice healthy stem. Be sure to wipe the scalpel with an alcohol wipe or cotton ball before the cuts are made. This is more of an art than a science, but if there is any doubt, cut a little higher. I love using scalpels because they cost less than X-ACTO knives, but either will work. You can purchase 100 scalpel blades on Amazon for about $8, compared with X-ACTO blades for 100 at $12. Do the cut on a piece of cardboard, **not** in your hand.

If you find the violet has a lower dried-up portion of stem, see how high it has traveled.

Dry Root Ball

This problem can sneak by any grower, especially if you top water only. I spoke to a grower at the African Violet Council of Florida Show in Lakeland who had been growing violets since 1980, and her preferred method is to take the dry plant and place it in a saucer of water to slowly revive the plant. Then, once watered, she repots it.

One of my plants that appears fine from above, but you can see the dry root ball.

When this occurs, I'm always leery of root rot, so I will take the plant that has been just watered and remove it from the saucer. After the excess water has dripped off, I place

the plant under a dome. After a day, I spray the soil with my Imidacloprid spray, at one-half fluid ounce per gallon of water. A stressed-out plant will attract both soil and foliar mealy bugs. Because Imidacloprid is a systemic solution, it will be absorbed throughout the plant.

Mealy Bugs

If I see signs of mealies, I immediately quarantine the plant and treat it until the mealies are gone, spraying either the foliage or the soil with an AVID solution, which has given me 100-percent results. This method also is recommended when the plant is a chimera or a rare violet. I take losing a chimera seriously, because many varieties in my collection are grown only by me and possibly a few others in the country. I could probably find a replacement somewhere in the world but doing so would be a last resort.

When a plant has mealies and you see faded leaves lacking the normal bright green color, you can water the plant with Foliage Pro from Dyna-Gro after treating the plant. This will help the violet eventually return to its natural green color. Dyna-Gro usually will not affect older deprived leaves, but allows new growth to display the restored chlorophyll.

New growth on this treated plant shows restored chlorophyll.

This approach to reviving a nearly dead plant works quite well, as long as you follow the steps to make sure that the stem has not dried out.

I would like to thank Carolee Carter for her technical and proofreading assistance

Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Cajun's Coujon

Exhibited by: Sharon Gartner
Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux

Judging the "Other" Gesneriads

By Mel Grice Englewood, Ohio melsgrice@gmail.com

According to the *AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* — "AVSA has adopted The Gesneriad Society, Inc. scale of points for judging gesneriads." Yet many AVSA judges and exhibitors have never attended a Gesneriad Society judging school or convention flower show. I am an AVSA senior judge and teacher and a Master Gesneriad Society judge. I have taught judging schools in both societies and will attempt to compare the two judging systems.

AVSA Merit System

AVSA shows are judged using the merit system of judging. Each exhibit is judged on its own merits rather than in competition against another plant. Any number of first, second or third ribbons, or other awards, can be given in each class as the judges deem worthy. So, there could be a "sea of blue" on the table. Plants only are in competition with each other when it comes time to choose Best In Class and higher awards.

Gesneriad Society Standard Competitive System

Gesneriad Society shows are judged using standard competitive judging. Only one first, second and third award is given in each class, no matter how many entries there are in each class. First place receives a blue ribbon and must score at least 90 points. Second place receives a red ribbon and must score at least 80 points. Third place receives a yellow ribbon and must score at least 70 points. Sometimes, an Honorable Mention award is given in especially large classes. So, it is quite possible that in large classes only three or four entries will receive awards and the rest will not receive an award. Any ribbon award, no matter the color, is desirable in a Gesneriad Society show. Basically, the first place award corresponds to an AVSA Best in Class award.

A Gesneriad Society score sheet with comments.

Gesneriad Judging Panel

All Gesneriad Society flower shows are judged by a panel of three judges and each entry is point-scored using a predetermined scale for each type of entry. Scoring uses whole numbers only; no fractions are permitted. Each entry **must** receive a different point score. Thus, it takes much longer to judge a Gesneriad Society flower show and requires more panels of judges to accomplish the task. Printed score sheets like in the photo are placed by each entry. Possible comments that might apply to each entry are printed there for the clerk to underline or circle the appropriate judges' comments. Some possible comments are: "healthy, vigorous, well shaped," or "damaged, discolored, misshapen leaves (or bloom)." Printed comments that do not apply are left unmarked. Exhibitors receive helpful information for further improvement from

the comments indicated on the score sheets. Judges are required to write additional comments for all exhibits scoring 70 points and higher. The plant in the photo received a score of 95 and only a second place ribbon. Another plant in the class scored higher and received the blue ribbon.

Point Deductions

The *AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* is very specific about the number of points and fractions of points that can be deducted for each flaw that is found. The Gesneriad Society *Flower Show Manual,* on the other hand, does not list a single suggested deduction for any flaw. This difference usually is difficult for AVSA judges taking a Gesneriad Society judging school to grasp. Gesneriad Society judges learn over time, by judging with good judges, what is permissible to deduct.

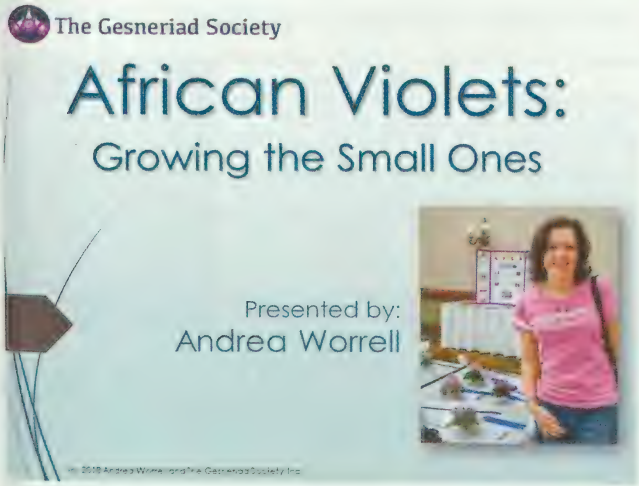
Culture, Condition and Bloom

Just like in an AVSA show, plants are judged based on cultural perfection, condition and bloom. Cultural perfection is the end result of all that has been done for a plant since it was acquired. Condition is grooming that has been done to improve the look of the plant right before the show. Bloom is a relative measurement depending upon the species, hybrid or cultivar.

Anyone judging the "other" gesneriads needs to be as familiar with the plant material as possible to judge fairly. Judges need to take advantage of every opportunity to learn about the plant material. A great way to see and learn about unusual gesneriads would be to attend the 2019 Gesneriad Society Convention Flower Show in Cincinnati, Ohio, this July 1 to 6, 2019. Contact me if you need more information. I guarantee that you will see plants there you have never seen before and have a great time doing it!

New in the AVSA Store: Online Courses

In collaboration with The Gesneriad Society, AVSA is very pleased to provide Gesneriad Society webinars (online courses) directly from the AVSA website. Proceeds from the sales of the webinars through AVSA will benefit both societies. The initial offering includes:



- Meet the Gesneriad Family — A Guide to Easy Growing, presented by Dale Martens, Paul Susi and Mary Schaeffer (free)
- Growing and Showing African Violets, presented by Sandy Skalski.
- Growing Saintpaulia Species: Mimicking Mother Nature, by Jeff Smith.

And a recent release:

- African Violets — Growing the Small Ones, presented by Andrea Worrell

The webinars cost only $14.95 each, and you can watch them on your own time. Meet the Gesneriads is a free webinar. Visit the AVSA Store, Educational Media section (www.avsa.org/education), to download one of these helpful webinars.

The Genus *Primulina*

By Paul Susi South Huntington, New York

In my experience, the plants in the genus *Primulina* tend to get a bad rap. By that, I mean that many growers have shied away from them because of misconceptions about their cultural requirements. The bottom line is that primulinas adapt easily and thrive if provided with cultural requirements much like African violets. It is possible that some of the misconceptions arise from the old genus *Chirita*, of which *Primulina* was once a part.

A grouping of Paul's primulinas.

Primulina 'Rachel'

DNA Evidence Helped

About 20 years ago, the feeling was that chiritas required cool temperatures and could stand limited water. However, at that time the genus was an assemblage of species united by a single characteristic: the shape of the stigma. As a result, growers most likely received conflicting cultural information for the entire genus, based on what was known for different species within the genus *Chirita*. DNA techniques eventually were applied to *Chirita* and the results, perhaps unsurprisingly, have led to the genus being divided into seven separate genera, each one not closely related to any of the others formerly placed within *Chirita*. The seven genera that have emerged all are now much more morphologically homogeneous than *Chirita* used to be. Five genera were identified in 2011: *Primulina* (the largest of the new genera), *Liebigia*, *Microchirita*, *Damrongia* and *Henckelia*. Since 2011, some former chiritas were moved to *Chaimaritia* and *Deinostigma*.

I like primulinas for several reasons. One is the variety of leaf and plant sizes, leaf color and patterning. And, with some of the new hybrids, additional flower colors have been introduced. A number of the newly discovered species also differ from what has been in cultivation. As a bonus, something is in flower almost every month of the year. Primulinas make great show exhibits in both the flowering and non-flowering classes.

Caring for Primulinas

Primulinas generally are found on north-facing limestone walls. In their natural environment, primulinas are faced with average monthly temperatures of 46 degrees F in January to 82 degrees in July and August. The average rainfall is between 2 inches in December and 13 inches in July, and humidity is generally more than 50 percent year-round. In cultivation, temperatures between 50 degrees and 85 degrees work very well, provided that the plants experience a 12- to 15-degree drop at night. However, I have not found this temperature drop to be critical. To reproduce the mostly wet and humid conditions, I grow the plants on capillary matting. All my primulinas are in a light blend of commercial African violet mix, perlite and vermiculite, about a 1:2:2 mix. I also add some dolomite lime. With this type of mix the plants can be grown on capillary matting or on wicks quite successfully.

Paul's *Primulina* 'Loki 2'.

If the plants are placed in individual saucers, they will need frequent watering as the light mix will dry out quickly. When potting them, remember that they naturally grow on rock walls where there is very little soil; the plants basically cling to the rock surfaces. Some growers use aquarium gravel or large perlite to fill approximately one-third of the pot to try and mimic this environment. Since they receive no direct sun in nature, they will do well in bright north-facing windows or under two T8 or T12 40-watt tubes.

Favorite Primulinas

I will mention just a few of my favorite primulinas: *P.* tabacum, *P.* 'Chiaki,' *P.* 'Loki,' *P.* 'Patina,' *P.* 'Naine Argente,' *P.* 'Rachel' and *P. glandulosa var. yangshuoensis.* Images of these and other primulinas can be found at the Gesneriad Reference Web.

The Gesneriad Society website has a resource page with a complete list of the changes in genera for all the former chiritas. The Gesneriad Society also has produced two webinars on *Primulina* ("Growing and Showing Primulinas" and "Primulina: from C to P."). Both are available at the society's online store and both of these webinars offer information on propagating and showing primulinas. Primulina seeds are available with a membership in The Gesneriad Society. A great place to find a variety of primulina plants is at the Gesneriad Society's annual convention. The 2019 convention will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Meet the AVM Editorial Board

Carolee Carter

Carolee Carter has been growing African violets for more than 35 years and presently nurtures about 150 varieties. "I have shared my knowledge as president of three affiliates located in South Florida, Northern California and Central Florida (Ocala), where I founded that club in 2007," says Carolee. She was president of the AV Council of Florida and was an AVSA director. For each of the local affiliates, Carolee created their newsletter and yearbook, and she has facilitated many programs locally and in other parts of the country on how to be a better grower — and exhibitor.

After working in two civic organizations, she spent the main portion of her career in various roles in the newspaper industry. "Being a member of the AVSA Editorial Board gives me great pleasure and affords me the opportunity to use my talents and provide assistance to our AVM Editor in any capacity she needs," says Carolee. Recently, Carolee also became chair of AVSA's Publications Committee.

Contest Entry —

An Odyssey

By Scott Russell Los Angeles, California

My package arrived, and I experienced a mild panic attack. I thought the African violet shipment would arrive after the wedding. As I unpacked the African violets, my enthusiasm raced. I realized that in a week, I would be 3,000 miles away in New England and I couldn't believe my African violet hobby beginning might be the end, since southern California gets in the 90's and 100's during late August and early September, which essentially can bake the plants to death.

I unpacked the 20 miniatures and semi-miniatures from the vendor and realized how well they were packaged. Not a single one had any damage. Unfortunately, I had no time to clear off a space, much less a plant shelf or stand. I retrieved a cookie sheet and placed them on it, watered, and set up a meatloaf pan to handle their water demands. My best friend, Jonathan, would need to be entrusted to take care of them as the time for my week-long trip to New England grew imminent. I was excited about the trip and wedding in Boston, but apprehensive to start with the plants at that time.

> I couldn't believe my African violet hobby beginning might be the end ...

Scott's new plants surviving his absence.

A couple of days before the wedding, we decided to go kayaking, then, an accident struck. As I was retrieving a rogue kayak, I fell into the black water and encountered a jetty laced with oyster shells and barnacles. With blood streaming out of my leg and knee, I had to pull myself to shore and catch a ride. I received 33 stitches and painkillers and had to delay my return another week for follow-up.

Finally arriving in Los Angeles, I saw that Jonathan had watered the plants, refilled the meatloaf pan and rotated the violets half-way to aid in their symmetry. They had already grown a bit and are awaiting their next trial by fire with me on my "African violet odyssey."

Contest Entry —

Classic Violet Spotlight: The 1960s

By Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama j-mckinney@mail.com

In my previous article on classic violets (AVM, November/December, page 44) I covered a selection of hybrids released in the 1950s. Now, I will highlight some of the golden classics from the 1960s. A vintage violet is a hybrid at least 25 years old, and I am using the term "classic" equivalently. Most of these descriptions come from First Class and many have photos in the database.

The '60s were years filled with history, with turbulent and inspiring events such as the first man on the moon in 1969. The decade also was a significant period for violet history. Crown, or Champion, variegation first appeared and here are some examples: Grand Canyon (1267), Happy Ending (1287), Keepsake (1268), Party Gown (1246), and Silver Crest (1161). Additionally, Tommie Lou (1744) and Mosaic variegated violets were registered in this decade. Emperor (1507) from 1965 is an early hybrid, with double light pink flowers with red tipped, top petals and mosaic variegated, dark green ovate leaves.

Classic Trailers

Interest in trailers started to increase in 1966 with the introduction of semi and mini trailers by Lyndon Lyon: Violet Trail (2468), and later, Pixie Blue (2598). Other interesting Lyon standards from 1964 were: Candy Lips (1461), Master Blue (1465), with double purple stars and white edges, and Peak of Pink (1467), with semidouble pink and white stars. For minis, Tiny Rose was registered in 1965 with double pink blossoms and dark green glossy leaves. Tiny Fantasy (1987) from 1969 has double lilac stars with blue fantasy and ovate mini leaves.

Granger Gardens

Granger Gardens introduced many beautiful hybrids during the 1960s. Chanticleer (1386), from 1963, has double light pink flowers and dark green, ovate, pointed and quilted leaves. Delft Imperial (1326) impressed with its double blue two-toned blooms and groovy quilted and scalloped foliage. Coral Queen (1523), Fandango (1782), Maid Marion (1529) and Purple Falcon (1327) are a few more. A favorite is Firebird (2018), registered in 1969. It dazzles with single bright red flowers with white edges and wavy leaves. There are two variants of Firebird, one with a thin white edge and another with a much wider and more striking edge. Next, Lullaby (1783) from 1967, is a lovely, two-tone double light blue with plain and quilted leaves. Another one that caught my attention is Seafoam (2024), with single medium blue flowers with wide white frilled edges and quilted wavy foliage.

Tinari Greenhouses

Tinari Greenhouses introduced many beauties in this decade as well. Carnival (1690) from 1967 has single fuchsia flowers and wide, white edges with pointed, wavy foliage. Other cool varieties are: Fireball (1196), Flash Supreme (1494) and Lady Wilson (1458) with double lavender blue blooms with white edges and dark green longifolia leaves. Lili Belle (2007) had fuchsia flowers; Pink Philly (1920) had bright pink flowers and Ruth Carey (1917) had semidouble peach-to-hot pink ruffled flowers with variable green edges and quilted, wavy leaves. Additionally, Starstruck (1371) had pretty violet and white stars, also with wavy foliage.

Other 1960s Favorites

Another enduring favorite, from Mrs. C. Anderson, is Double Black Cherry (1178) from 1960 with double wine-red flowers and quilted foliage. Moreover, Jimmy Dates released many unique hybrids such as: Spootnik (1498) with reddish purple wasps; Hood Wink (1896), with blue wasps with white fluted edges; Pink Wasp (1497) and Wham Bang (1899), with double cerise red wasp flowers.

Please consider growing and sharing a few of the stimulating '60s classics so our African violet heritage can continue to be part of our violet future.

Contest Entry —

Saintpaulia in Natural Light

By Elena Rogow San Antonio, Texas

Almost every agricultural extension or growers' club's initial introduction to the art of cultivating African violets begins with a paragraph stating that African violets definitely can be grown in natural light and will flower in that condition, before segueing directly to an explanation on how to set up artificial grow lights for near constant bloom. However, many people face budget constraints, so this article will focus on growing African violets in natural light.

The one thing nearly all my research sources could agree on is that even under artificial lights, African violets require at least eight hours of darkness per day. The necessary light requirement seemed to vary more extensively, however. I saw estimates of eight hours to 16 hours of light per day. However, *Saintpaulia ionantha* is from equatorial Africa, and it's safe to say that the maximum amount of sunlight the originating plant species receives is about 12 hours a day, which I think is a happy medium.

Where to Place the Plants

So, the first step in growing your plant is siting it appropriately. Where is appropriate? Wherever you can get the right amount of indirect light. Most people usually suggest an eastern or southern orientation is best. However, given that I live in Texas, which receives from 10 to 14 hours of strong sunlight per day, depending on the season, I've actually found great success in growing before a northwest-oriented window. The important thing is looking for and testing the best light, which should have the following qualities:

- Light is bright enough to induce photosynthesis.
- The plant receives the light for at least 10 hours per day.
- Light is not so strong as to induce leaf wilt or leaf burn.

You might need to move your plants as the seasons change. I, for instance, have a direct eastern exposure I'm planning to try out this year as a winter site. But as long as the first three conditions are met, any violet should thrive. Once you've sited your plants, remember to rotate them 90 degrees every few days. Since the light is not from directly overhead, the plant eventually will grow toward the light, giving your plants an unsightly tilt.

Potting Medium

Next, your potting medium still needs to be light and porous enough for shallow root systems to develop, and you will still need to repot your African violets at set intervals to refresh the soil, clean the pots and allow the plant to regrow its roots. Miniature and semi-miniature violets are especially vulnerable when not repotted. In my experience, they will not flower unless repotted appropriately. I've seen several lackluster plants immediately set buds within one to two weeks of repotting. Standard violets can last a longer time without repotting, but every four to six months still is ideal. They often have the same reaction of sending out buds within one to two weeks of repotting.

Elena with some of her sunlight-grown plants.

Water Still Matters

The next condition to growing violets in natural light is water. African violets in natural light will not have the

explosive growth of those plants grown under artificial light, so they will not need as much water, but they still need it! You can use whatever watering system you think is best, as long as you check it regularly and replenish as necessary. I use a wick system, which is easier for me to check, but I've seen some growers online use terra cotta pots with success. If it's very bright outside, you'll need to water more; when it's overcast, you'll need to water less, at least in my experience.

Rob's Suicidal Squirrel grown in natural light.

Temperature

Finally, we must address the temperature. African violets are descended from a plant native to a mountainous, tropical region. So, they are predisposed to enjoying a moist, humid environment, but not an exceedingly hot one. Generally, a range of 60 to 85 degrees F is the flowering range, and a range of 50 to 60 degrees is a holding point, where new leaf growth appears but slowly. In a climate-controlled house, African violets essentially should always be in that flowering range, but if windows are poorly insulated, or you live in a colder region, your violets might not flower in winter. However, you need only wait, and next spring they will flower once again! If you still want to extend your flowering season without the use of light, try growing species *Saintpaulia*, which might be more cold hardy than cultivated varieties.

Note from Lynda C. Welchel, President of Sunshine African Violet Society: Sunshine AVS is very proud of Elena Rogow, one of our newest members, who grows only in natural light. Windowsill growing is popular; it is amazing what growers can accomplish. Sunshine AVS in San Antonio, Texas, has several accomplished windowsill growers. Our members have been amazed at their plants, many of which would have more than held their own at a judged show.

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Karen Broadway

10028 N. 58th Lane Glendale, AZ 85302-1334
Donations received from October 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018 Total: $70

Two-tone – $25-$49
Crosstown AVC, Waunakee, W

Thumbprint – Under $25
Montrose AVS, Van Nuys, CA
In memory of Barbara Burde

Thumbprint (continued)
Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council, Shiloh, IL
In memory of John Williams
Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN
Gloria Vanderhorst, Chevy Chase, MD
Jacquelyn Stuart, Walkertown, NC

Gesneriads for Cool Growing Conditions

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

Although there are gesneriads for almost every household climate, some of us who love the plants insist on trying those that don't quite fit our growing conditions. I grow all my "other gesneriads" in my basement, where the only source of heat is from our oil burner that sits across the length of the basement and the heat from the light fixtures. When I was growing under T12 fixtures, there was quite a bit of heat and I decided to have the lights come on during the evening so that the plants would be cooler during the summer months. This also was helpful in the winter to keep the area warmer during the coldest part of the day.

Several years ago, as the ballasts started to burn out, I changed them over to T8 ballasts and bulbs. This cut down on the amount of electricity I was using and added more light while reducing the heat from the fixtures. I knew that I would have to do something to keep the plants warmer during the winter months, so I now tent the stands with plastic sheeting designed to protect floors and furniture when painting. Depending on the stands you have, you also can purchase heavy plastic covers that fit over the stands. The tents have zippers on the front for easy access to plants but are more expensive than plastic drop cloths.

Gesneriad growing stands in Karyn's basement.

Plants I Grow

So, what kinds of plant can I grow in these conditions? *Primulina, Petrocosmea* and *Streptocarpus* love these conditions. *Drymonia* (one of my favorite gesneriads) and *Nematanthus* do well during the summer months but sometimes will drop some leaves during winter. The upright, woody stemmed columneas are more adapted to the cooler temperatures, as many grow at higher elevations, but they also sometimes will drop leaves if the temperatures get too chilly.

With these types of growing conditions, you can grow rhizomatous and tuberous plants. These have a dormancy period and are great plants to grow if you have a growing area that is affected by cool winter temperatures, especially if you are a window grower.

The types of rhizomatous plants that I grow are *Achimenes*, *Eucodonia, Gloxinia* and *Kohleria*, to name a few. I grow them in Oyama pots, which have a reservoir to hold water and help keep the soil moist. I've found that most, if not all, rhizomatous plants do better if they are kept evenly moist. Rhizomatous plants grow in areas of Central and South America where there is a wet season and a dry season, so I try to mimic that. When they go dormant in the fall, I cut the plants back to soil level and then just water sparingly so the soil doesn't completely dry out. Around the end of January or early February, I dump the soil out of the pots, harvest the rhizomes, and replant them in clean pots and fresh soil. The rhizomes are placed about one inch under the top of the soil. I lightly water the pot and then once

again water sparingly until I see the new shoots coming up, then I increase water by filling the reservoirs. I have found that I get the best results growing rhizomatous gesneriads under a two-tube T8 fixture where the tops of the pots are about 10 inches from the light bulbs. Some do well under a four-tube T8 fixture, but the distance from the pot tops to the light bulbs has to be increased to between 12 and 14 inches or the amount of time the lights are on decreased. I have my lights on for 10 hours a day.

Finding the perfect gesneriad for your growing conditions might take a few tries.

Growing *Sinningia*

I also grow many sinningias, which are tuberous plants. Most of my collection consists of species plants, but I have some micro-mini and mini hybrids. When the plants start looking sad in the fall, I cut them back, leaving about a half-inch of the stem on the tuber. You don't want to cut the stem flush with the tuber because it might get damaged and won't send up new growth; the stem dries up and eventually falls off. I leave the tubers in the pots and water sparingly during the winter months. Dormant tubers left in wet soil will rot. When I see the tuber send up new growth, I increase my watering.

Since sinningias don't need deep pots or a lot of soil, I find that I don't have to repot them as often as other plants. I try to take them out of the pots every two years and freshen the soil; often, I put them back into the same size pot, but sometimes I admit they don't get repotted that often and there have been occasions when I had to repot because the tuber grew and filled the pot completely. I've started using LED T8 replacement bulbs in some of my four-tube fixtures and I've found that the sinningias are quite happy with the extra light, grow more compactly and bloom better. I have these lights on for 10 hours as well.

I also grow *Sinningia* and *Kohleria* in planters that I set outside during the summer months on an east-facing stoop. The natural bright light and several hours of direct sunlight really help get the *S. brasiliensis* and *S. sellovii* growing to their full potential with stems that can reach four feet high. These would be perfect plants to grow in a southern garden, where they could be kept in the ground all year round. Southern growers also could try growing some rhizomatous plants directly in their gardens but would have to make sure the plants don't dry out during the growing season. This year I purchased a plant tower with six rows of planting holes around the cylinder. There is a tube that stands in the middle of the cylinder used for watering and the soil is placed around it. I planted each row with different achimenes hybrid rhizomes. It took about two weeks for the rhizomes to sprout and in a few months, I had nice lush plants growing that gave me wonderful blooms all summer.

Karyn's achimenes tower.

Finding the perfect gesneriad for your growing conditions might take a few tries, but there are so many to choose from and you can have fun trying them out. I would suggest checking out the Gesneriad Reference Web on the Gesneriad Society website, http://www.gesneriads.info/. It has great pictures, information and articles that will be helpful in choosing the right plant.

Annual Convention —

Registration for Judging School for Students and Certificate Renewals

A judging school is being offered for AVSA members during the Houston convention. The school, taught by Sue Hoffmann, will be held on Wednesday, May 29, 2019. It is geared to all levels and appropriate as a first-time judging school, to qualify for a certificate renewal, or simply as an interesting class for established judges to keep judging criteria up-to-date. The school will focus on judging an AVSA show.

Class will run from 8 a.m. to noon, with practice judging from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. You must attend both sessions in order to take the exam. After a short lunch break, the exam will begin at 2:30 p.m.

The exam has three sections: Part 1: (50 questions), Part 2: (40 questions), and Part 3: point-scoring two specimen plants (10 points). Part 1 of the exam will be emailed to each registered student on May 11, 2019 (USPS available upon request.) Part 1 is to be completed at home and must be turned in at the beginning of class on May 29, 2019. An AVSA membership card and judge's card (if already a judge) must be presented at the door. Proof of three blue ribbons should be presented to take the test, but exceptions to this rule can be discussed with the teacher. There are no requirements to audit the school. All students must bring a current copy of the AVSA Handbook (13th Edition, revised May 2016) to the school.

The $15 registration fee applies to all who attend the judging school, either to take the test or to audit the class. There is a place on the Convention Registration Form for payment; do not send payment to the teacher.

Registration and payment are due by May 10, 2019. Find the Judging School registration form and information on the AVSA website (Convention) after January 1, 2019.

AVSA 2019 Annual Convention Souvenir Book Ads

This year's convention is in Houston, Texas, May 26 to June 2, 2019. The theme is "Violet Fun in the Texas Sun."

We invite you to advertise in our Convention Souvenir Book. The souvenir book ads help defray costs. Ads can be well-wishes or advertising. This is an excellent way to promote your organization.

The maximum size of a full-page ad is 8 inches high x 5 inches wide; a half-page ad is 4 inches high x 5 inches wide; and a quarter-page ad is 2 inches high x 5 inches wide. The rates for the ads are: quarter-page for $30, half-page $50, and a full-page ad is $90. All inside ads will be in black and white. We also offer three full-page ads placed on the inside front cover, inside back cover and outside back cover for $125, printed in black and white, or $150, printed in color. Only cover pages can be in color.

To purchase an ad, please contact Jim Williams, Souvenir Book Chair, 829 Old Highway 20, Unit A, McDade, TX 78650; email: jimsviolets@gmail.com. The deadline for all ads is April 15, 2019. Camera-ready copy is preferred (PDF or Word doc or jpg file). Find forms or more information at www.avsa.org/conventions-2019.

Checks or money orders in U.S. dollars should be made payable, and sent, to Vickie Crider, Houston Convention Treasurer, 6922 Sunflower Grove Drive, Humble, TX 77346.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Houston Westchase District – Home to the 2019 AVSA Convention and Show

Our 2019 Convention and Show will be held at the Houston Marriott Westchase in Houston, Texas. The newly transformed property has spacious décor, room refrigerators and free Internet. But don't enjoy the room so much that you miss all our convention tours, activities, show and sale in the hotel's renovated meeting space. And be sure to schedule free time for what awaits outdoors. We think you'll love being in the center of Houston's Westchase District, home to the Galleria Shopping center, apartment communities, the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center, public art, and beautiful parks and fitness trails.

Houston skyline courtesy of Visit Houston.

Westchase wasn't always the perfect location for a convention. The land once was owned by prominent Houstonite Bob Smith, who ranched on the land and brought the Houston Colt .45s (today the Houston Astros) to the city. Back in the day, there were few roads, and those the area had were full of potholes.

> We think you'll love being in the center of Houston's Westchase District.

In the 1970s, Smith's widow sold hundreds of acres of his ranch land to developers, who brought in retail establishments, corporate offices and apartments. The roads have improved and so have the amenities. The district boasts dozens of restaurants, many within walking distance of our convention hotel.

Watch for more information on convention tours, presentations and our agenda on the AVSA website in January. And be sure to mark your calendar for May 26 through June 2, 2019. We'll see you in Houston for some Violet Fun in the Texas Sun!

2019 AVSA Convention Awards Houston, Texas Convention Show

By Debbie McInnis Floyds Knob, Indiana dkmcinnis@twc.com

Thanks to the many individuals, clubs and councils who have offered their generous award support for the 2018 AVSA Convention and Show in Houston. It is your generosity that makes our show so special and puts smiles on the faces of the winners. If your name, club or council is not on this list, there is still time to be included. Please, we invite you and your affiliate club members to donate to the 2019 show awards fund. Donations already are arriving. Please send your check or money order to:

AVSA Awards
2375 North Street
Beaumont, TX 77702

A number of pledges from our show in Buffalo have not yet been received. There is still time to be included in the souvenir convention book. The final deadline to be listed in the Souvenir Book will be **April 13, 2019**. We look forward to hearing from you.

You may view a current awards listing on the AVSA web site at www.avsa.org, under Convention. Although we've made every attempt to list awards correctly, we reserve the right to modify or change these listings.

Specified Awards—Amateur Division

Best Robinson Collection, $200
The Violet Barn, Dr. Ralph and Olive Robinson (NY)
2nd Best Robinson Collection, $100
The Violet Barn, Ralph and Olive Robinson (NY)
Best AVSA Registered Russian Collection, $300
Tatiana & Vladimir Kalgin
2nd Best AVSA Registered Russian Collection, $200
Tatiana & Vladimir Kalgin
3rd Best AVSA Registered Russian Collection, $100
Tatiana & Vladimir Kalgin
Best Holtkamp Collection, $300 and Rosette
Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
2nd Best Holtkamp Collection, $200 and Rosette
Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
3rd Best Holtkamp Collection, $100 and Rosette
Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
Best Buckeye Collection, $200, Pat Hancock (OH)
2nd Best Buckeye Collection, $100, Pat Hancock (OH)
Best Lyndon Lyon Collection, $200
Lyndon Lyon Green Houses – Paul Sorano (NY)
2nd Best Lyndon Lyon Collection, $100
Lyndon Lyon Green Houses – Paul Sorano (NY)

Specific Variety Awards—Amateur Horticulture

$50 Best Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Dayton AVS
$50 Best Buckeye Lady Love, Pat Hancock (OH)
$50 Best Buckeye Nostalgia, Cincinnati AVS
$50 Best Concord, Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
$25 Best Del's Spring Blush
Violet Reflections Group Jana Strathmann (IN)
In memory of Del Setchel
$25 Best Everdina, Susan Anderson (AZ)
$50 Best LE Karusel, Starz N Streps –
Steve and Donna Turner (SC)
$100 Best Jersey Snowflakes, Robert Kurzynski (NJ)
$50 Best Jitterbug Anne's Delight, Dayton AVS
$50 Best Jitterbug Begin the Beguine
Cincinnati AVS
$50 Best Kent Stork Kansas City Barbecue
Missouri Valley African Violet Council
$25 Best Lela Marie, Early Bird Violet Club (AL)
$25 Best Lonestar Helen Mahr
Richard and Anne Nicholas (TX)
$25 Best Lonestar Lady
Richard and Anne Nicholas (TX)
$50 Best Lonestar Twilight
Richard and Anne Nicholas (TX)
$20 Best Marching Band, Karyn Cichocki (NJ)
In Memory of Kent Stork
$35 Best Ozark Sinningia,
Dave's Violets – David Harris (MO)
$75 Best Rodeo Country, Spring Branch AV Club (TX)

$25 Best Sailor Boy, Mike and Debbie McInnis (IN)
In Honor of Judy Carter
$25 Best Standard Lonestar Series Plant
Tom and Marge Savage (TX)
$100 Best The Alps, Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
$25 Best Janet (Maas), Janet Riemer (NJ)
$25 Best Tina (Maas), Janet Riemer (NJ)
$25 Best Aca's Libbie, Tom and Libbie Glembocki (NC)
$25 Best Wrangler's Spanish Cavalier
Tom and Libbie Glembocki (NC)

Specific Awards—Commercial Division

Best Holtkamp Collection, $300 and Rosette
Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
2nd Best Holtkamp Collection, $200 and Rosette
Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
3rd Best Holtkamp Collection, $100 and Rosette
Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
Best Lela Marie, $25, Early Bird Violet Club (AL)

Undesignated—Amateur Horticulture

$40 Terri Vicenzi (IN)
$100 First Nighter African Violet Society (TX)
$75 Mary Corondan
$20 Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Council
$100 North Texas African Violet Judges Council

Specific Design Awards—Amateur Division

$35 Best Container Garden, Janet Fox (CA)
$35 Best Dish Garden, Janet Fox (CA)
$35 Best Terrarium, Janet Fox (CA)

Undesignated—Amateur Design

$20 Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Council

Undesignated—Amateur

$50 Terri Post (IA)
$25 Cheryl O'Connor (NY)
$100 First AVS of Denton (TX)
$200 Joe Bruns (IL)
$25 John and Doris Brownlie (ON, Canada)
$100 Laurel and Winston Goretsky (AB, Canada)
$50 Laurene Jones (VA)
$25 Leonard Re (CA)
$50 Linda & Albert Hall (MO)
$50 Linda Kilby (PA)
In memory of Peggy Mooney
$25 Lorraine Hilfer (OH)
$50 Marge and Bill Farrand (MI)
$100 Ohio State AVS
$135 Sayeh D. Beheshti (ON, Canada)
$25 South Coast AVS (CA)
$50 Tampa AVS (FL)
$500 Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Russia)
$25 Tri-Counties AVS (CA)
$25 Tustana AVS (CA)

AVSA Booster Fund

By Dianna Walston

2210 S. Courtland Ave. Kokomo, IN 46902
September to October 31, 2018 Total $180

Multicolor – $50-$99

Nacy Carr, Reynoldsburg, OH
Ohio State AVS

Two-tone – $25-$49

LuAnn Christenson, Eldridge, IA
Quad Cities AVS
Rachel Martin, Irvine, CA
Alice Peterson, Waunakee, WI
Crosstown AVC

Thumbprint – Under $25

Brenda M. Brasfield, Olive Branch, MS
Nancy Frost, Ocala, FL
Kris Johnson, Bellingham, WA
Kathleen Miller, Miami, FL
In memory of Mom and Dad
Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN
Neville W. Ward, Great Falls, VA

Contest Entry —

Philosophy of an African Violet Peddler

By Frank Perdomo www.dandypot.com

This starts from a leaf? Yes, a furry leaf that reminds me of lamb's ear but not like those delicate leaves of fussy fresh cut flowers that wilt so easily. Civics, economics, and the humanities are the main social sciences I study and teach, so I feel compelled to share my experience as a direct seller of African violets, for more than a decade now, having completed thousands of one-to-one sales convincing customers to purchase this extraordinary plant. My lovely wife and soulmate, Laura, and I are the owners of The Peacock Cottage, and the official manufacturer and distributer of Dandy Pots.

My prized Orange Lipstick plant (*Aeschynanthus speciosus*).

Arctic Frost grown in a purple Original Dandy Pot.

Lesson No. 1:
African Violets Are Tougher than You Think

Most novice growers voice frustration after killing a plant. Few people persist through trial and error. To keep trying and grow successfully takes care, effort and drive worthy of the intrinsic rewards: earning green thumbs. There is also credence to the saying African violets "thrive on neglect." Having sweated alongside the plants in sizzling Florida sun, I can attest to the hardiness of this plant to stand up to the elements to reach a larger audience, through sudden tropical storm force winds, showers and blasts of direct sun blazing late into afternoon hours.

Lesson No. 2:
African Violets Spread Far and Wide

Our violets spread from Mount Kilimanjaro to outer space, from the origins of the species to Optimara-scale production and beyond. Rhapsodie Cora was our first official violet grown in our living room in 2002. Since then Laura and I have grown along with our business, selling African violets throughout the year across Florida at dozens of botanical gardens, seasonal festivals, club shows and at our retail shop in Ocala.

Through the rush of crowds, pets and unpredictable weather, we set out our wares and plants. We have braved the competition to reach a wider audience and continue to convince others to see the resilience and beauty in growing a collection. We have set up stands and light racks in hobbyists' homes, taking their growing to the next level. We attended the 2017 AVSA convention in Orlando and are eagerly awaiting 2019 in Houston.

As Millennials, we use social media to communicate and it is encouraging to see AVSA on Pinterest and Instagram. The fanaticism of violets globally is remarkable across geography and generations — just look at the Russian and Iranian collectors. Many Floridians are retiring from a life up north, and now struggle with adapting their horticultural know-how to the heat of zones 8 to 10. Further, houseplants are trending and violets are poised for even greater appreciation as more people turn to indoor gardening.

Lesson No. 3:
African Violets Share an Intimate History

Picture this: the Fall 1890s Festival in McIntosh, in Marion County, Florida. The sweet and salty smell of fresh kettle corn is in the air, as are the clicking and clanking sounds of vendors' pop-up tents; the streets filled with families and festivities erupt. Customers will confide in how African violets are at the center of their family, memories of mothers and grandmothers inheriting 30-year-old violets while buying their young relatives a new hybrid for a bright, blooming future.

We are cheered by the continuation of this cycle of sharing in the pleasure of African violets, and fortunate to be a part of the community. Whether hosting classes at our shop or providing care tips and tutorials at garden clubs and in person, we aim to help grow the love one plant at a time. Thanks!

Article Contest Update

By Pat Hancock Middletown, Ohio

I wait, expectantly, for each *African Violet Magazine* to come so that I can see how many new contest articles are there.

The winners this year will be treated to leaves from **Carol Eros** ("Morgan" series) of Edmonton, Alberta. She sent leaves of many of her hybrids to me in September, and I am growing them out so that I can include them for the contest winners. I also will include some new "Herbugs" series leaves. **Linda Hall** will be furnishing leaves of "Wasps" and "Bustlebacks" — a real treat for those who love violets that are a bit different.

Isn't it amazing how many different violets have originated from the original "species"? It seems to be never-ending. I have become infatuated with the little plant "Lunar Lily White." I have tried to make seed pods, but only one developed and it did not have viable seed. **Kathy Hajner** also has been using it and has one good seed pod, so far. Kathy will again be sending leaves of some of her new hybrids to the winners.

Steve Covolo, who sent his strep hybrids to winners last year, will be sending new violet hybrids this year.

Jay Sespico did a program at the Ohio State African Violet Society Show in September, showcasing all of his beautiful sinningias. We all were "wowed" by his plants' beautiful bright colors. He will again send tubers to the three contest winners.

Blossom from Kathy Hajner's "K's" series

Steve Covolo's 'Steffano's Azure Diamonds'

I know we have many AVSA members who would benefit from your experiences of new things you have learned. Please write about them so all of us can benefit. It is our magazine, and it will be only as informative as we make it.

Keep writing,
Pat

Contest Entry —

Root Mealybugs in Hot Water

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

Mealybugs: the one word that elicits many negative emotions in African violet, gesneriad and other houseplant enthusiasts. It brings to mind imagery of creepy, crawly, alien-looking insects whose sole purpose is to decimate your African violet collection, which you have tended to for many hours and days. Once you see them, you know you are about to put on your battle gear and go to war with these pests. Unlike their above-ground cousins, root mealybugs can quietly multiply unseen and unchecked until you finally spot them in your wicking reservoir (**see A in Figure**) or even on your wick (**B**, magnified 40X in **C**). At this point, the mealybug population might be approaching its housing limit, and the unwanted pests look for a new home.

Infestations are not uncommon, especially when purchasing new plants to eventually add to a growing collection, and many African violet hobbyists have encountered and fought these buggers at some point. The war often involves toxic, chemical warfare. Some growers choose to opt out of the war, and either toss the plants, re-propagate from leaves, or decapitate and regrow the roots.

Treat with Heat

A report published in 1996 in *Arthropod Management* by Hu and colleagues from the University of Hawaii in Hilo discussed immersing plants' roots in hot water for 10 minutes to eradicate soil mealybugs. After treatment, the authors saw no damage in the above-ground portion of the plants. Since then, heated water immersion treatments have been successfully done in lime and grape plants.

I decided to test this on my own isolated African violets that were infected with root mealybugs. As a safeguard (highly recommended for those doing heated water treatment for the first time), I've made leaf propagations as a precaution. The key is to expose the pot, potting mix and roots to 120 degrees F for 10 minutes, without subjecting the above-ground vegetative tissue to heat. Plants in 4-inch pots are hydrated before proceeding, and the soil portion should be healthy (except for the root mealybugs) prior to treating them with the following procedure:

Supplies:

- reliable analog/digital thermometer
- large clear glass bowl that can accommodate entire pot
- pot to heat water
- spatula or ladle
- transfer pipette or eye dropper

Procedure

1. Measure the distance from the base of the pot to the soil line.
2. Heat a pot of water to 140 degrees F (confirm with an accurate thermometer).

3. Pour the water into a large clear bowl, up to the height previously determined by soil line. *Because the bowl is at room temperature, the water temperature quickly cools down to about 135 degrees.*

4. Gently stir the water so the temperature is even throughout the bowl.

5. Place the potted African violet into the hot water. *The water seeping into the pot will quickly cool down. The heated water should be at the level of the soil line.*

6. Plunge a thermometer into the top quarter-inch of soil, making sure the reading is at or approaching the critical temperature range of 120 to 125 degrees F (**D** and **E in figure**, top and side views). ***IMPORTANT**: The surface of the soil is well below this temperature range, even with the pot in the water, so use a transfer pipette or disposable eye dropper to move hot water from the bowl into the soil around the plant, avoiding getting hot water on leaves* (see **F**).

7. Once the thermometer reaches 120 to 125 degrees, set your timer for 10 minutes. During those 10 minutes, move the temperature probe around different regions of the pot to ensure all portions are receiving the hot water. *Do not let the temperature dip below 120 degrees during those 10 minutes. If it starts cooling down too quickly, transfer more hot water from the bowl onto the soil's surface.*

8. After 10 minutes, remove the pot and let the plant rest in a clean, sterilized container at room temperature. *If any mealybugs remain floating in the heated water, pull them out with a pipette into a dish with a dark background and view them with a microscope at 40X. You should see no movement* (**G**).

9. Plants are safe to place back in their quarantine locations under lights.

10. Repeat the procedure twice more, two weeks apart.

Discussion

I immersed adult mealybugs in 120-, 140- and 160-degree water, and monitored the adults until movement ceased, which signaled death. Adult soil mealybugs died after six minutes of exposure to 120 degrees, and under two minutes at 140 degrees. Though 160 degrees caused immediate death to the adults, it also caused significant root damage. Under these conditions, 140 degrees F is most effective and safe for the plants. Though this treatment is effective for adult soil mealybugs, eggs and young nymphs can remain protected by the waxy secretions. Treating three times, two weeks apart should catch the hatched eggs and kill them before they have a chance to breed. In all cases, one treatment was insufficient.

> I decided to test this on my own isolated African violets that were infected with root mealybugs.

The above procedure is suggested for plants in 4-inch pots. For minis, semi-minis and plants in pots two inches or smaller, I instead used a water temperature of 130 degrees. Because of the smaller pot and less soil, the soil quickly reached the critical temperature range of 120 to 125 degrees. Mature plants with thick root growth or those grown in 6-inch pots or larger did not reach this temperature range as easily, making this treatment less effective for larger pots.

This hot-water treatment can be tricky for pot huggers or African violets with leaves draping over the pot edge. To get around that, I've placed a ring around the bowl's edge, and slowly lowered the pot into the water, carefully lifting and repositioning the leaves so they're resting on the ring and are not exposed to the heated water (**H**). For the extreme pot huggers with leaves that will break if repositioned, you most likely will have to sacrifice those outer leaves. If leaves come in contact with the heated water, they will brown and die quickly (**I**). To treat many 4-inch or less potted plants at once, I poured 140-degree water into a tray and immersed the pots at the same time, using the temperature probe to check all the pots to make sure they reached the critical temperature range.

Following Treatment

After treatment, continue to monitor the plants. Droopy outer leaves indicate root damage, which occurred in the 160-degree treatment. Take proper measures to decapitate and regrow the crown. Otherwise, a month after the last treatment, examine the treated African violet's roots. The superficial roots that contact the pot's

surface might appear dead, but you should see new growth. The residual wax from the mealybugs might persist, so remove that portion and repot. If there are signs of persistent soil mealybug infestations, repeat the procedure. This treatment was successfully tested on several uninfected plants and other gesneriads such as *Petrocosmea*, *Primulina* and *Streptocarpus*.

Heated water treatments have been shown to be effective on several plant species, and now for African violets as well. This is an inexpensive and effective way to treat these pests, as they are less likely to develop heat resistance than pesticide resistance. Having one or two fewer toxic chemicals in the house is welcome and eases my mind, and likely others too. If you come across root mealybugs and are not inclined to chemical warfare, heated water treatments might be an alternative.

Disclaimer: No plants from my collection died as a result of this experiment. One plant out of two dozen treated suffered root damage and droopy leaves, but resumed normal growth one month after decapitation. I have added this procedure to my quarantine regimen. My soil mix consists of 75 percent perlite, 24 percent peat moss, and less than 1 percent diatomaceous earth and vermiculite. This procedure might require optimization with your own soil mixture and conditions. Please take proper precautions for any new chemical/nonchemical treatment, and back up your plants before treatment.

Sources in article: Hue et al, Arthropod Management, 1996; Gould et al, Journal of Economic Entomology, 2000; and Haviland et al, Journal of Economic Entomology 2005.

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

***Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Smokin' Hot'**

Hybridized by: D. Martens
Exhibited by: Dale Martens

Growing Petrocosmeas in a Warm, Dry Climate

By Leonard Re Fountain Valley, California buffboy@social.rr.com

My interest in growing *Petrocosmea* started in 2008 when visiting the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Club during a Gesnariad Society board retreat. Paul Kroll was giving a talk on petrocosmeas and, with his usual generosity, gave us offshoots and leaves of his cultivars. During his talk, Paul mentioned cool growing conditions, limited watering and limited repotting growing at his home in New York. In 2009, I met Tim Tuttle, who we all know as "Mr. Petrocosmea." Tim's growing conditions are similar to Paul's and Tim grows most of his plants in a cellar. So, creating cool growing conditions was going to be my biggest challenge, since my house averages in the low to mid 70s during the summer and high 60s during the winter with about 35 percent humidity.

Petrocosmea minor grown by Paul Kroll. Photo by Mel Grice.

Petrocosmea Care

Interestingly, I have found "acceptable" areas and the plants have adapted. I've experimented with growing under both natural and fluorescent lighting and petrocosmeas have done better under fluorescent lights (two cool white T12 tubes on 11 hours per day). I use the vacant corners of the plant trays, which probably have the least amount of light. I use my standard African violet mix of peat/perlite/vermiculite with a "pinch" of dolomite lime in each pot. I grow the plants in shallow one- to one and a half-inch condiment cups and put a small hole in the bottom of the cup with a very thin wick.

I bottom water the small starter plants, but once mature, they are wick watered using distilled water with 10 drops of pH Up. On most days, I mist all my plants as soon as the lights turn on (and after I have a couple of cups of coffee). I use the same fertilizer rotation on all my plants (Dyna-Gro; Grow More; Eleanor's VF-11 and nonurea orchid fertilizer). Also, once a month, I drench all my plants using distilled water with an added one-half teaspoon of Epsom salt.

Petrocosmea Challenges

Blooming is the area that remains a challenge for me. The only plant I have been successful with consistently blooming is *P. minor*. The others either have not bloomed or bloomed once or twice. But as an offset to this, I use the plants extensively in my dish gardens and terrariums because they add interesting plant material to the exhibits and fill vacant spaces.

Use caution when transplanting petrocosmeas! As both Paul and Tim have warned me, the plants don't like their roots disturbed and transplanting should be limited. I can testify to this, since the few plants I have lost died after a transplant. So, have fun with petrocosmeas. They grow slowly, take up little space and make for interesting plant material.

Contest Entry —

Fun with Chimera Trailers

By Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama

African violet chimeras are quite striking and dazzle with their striped flowers. They are not more difficult to grow than other violets; however, their propagation can be a little challenging. Chimeras have two layers of different genetic tissue and won't come true from leaf cuttings. You likely will get one color or the other, but no stripes. Chimeras only come true from suckers, blossom stems or tissue culture. Since tissue culture can be expensive and requires sterile conditions, it is not very practical for hobbyists. Thus, we will concentrate on suckers and blossom stems for propagation.

Look for Suckers

When you first buy that beautiful chimera, it is a good idea to look for suckers. Search for one of manageable size, large enough to survive on its own (usually with four leaves or more). Examine it closely to see if you can remove it without damaging the mother plant. If you cannot, you can allow it to grow larger, or remove it piece by piece and wait for one to grow again.

When you first buy that beautiful chimera, it is a good idea to look for suckers.

Some growers report success using KeikiGrow Plus, which contains the plant hormone cytokinin. If you use it, you only need a tiny amount applied to the crown or blossom stem. Plants with larger bracts are easier to root after planting in soilless mix. Varieties with tiny bracts grow suckers better while still attached to the mother plant. A drastic last resort to propagate a chimera is to cut out the center, plant it, and hope the headless original produces suckers. It can be quite risky, since the chimera could die before it produces any plantlets!

Standard trailer Sunray Trail, a single chimera.

Start with Trailers

If you are new to growing chimeras, I would recommend starting with trailing varieties since they produce suckers naturally and sometimes quite freely! Rob's Miriwinni (8457) is a beautiful semi-mini trailer with pink flowers, blue fantasy and a light blue center stripe. It is easy to grow, but also a dropper.

Another beautiful dropper and good bloomer is Sunray Trail (6475), a standard trailer with light green leaves and

white stars with pink side stripes. A second standard trailer is Hawaiian Trail (Japanese). Its blooms are single chimera lavender blue stars with white stripes. The foliage is medium green and glossy.

If you prefer minis, check out Pony Ride (7590), which grows easily and freely produces white flowers with blue side stripes. Additionally, Pixie Runaround Sport has beautiful variegation, a diminutive growth habit, and cute blue flowers with large white center stripes.

Leaf Chimeras

Some chimeras have normal blooms but specially variegated foliage. Also called leaf chimeras, they must be sucker or bloom stalk propagated. The variegation won't fade with leaf maturity or temperature changes. VA Bank is one of these with white flowers. Pearl Joy (Zhemchuzhnyi Vostorg), a rare Russian sport of Rob's Boolaroo, has pink flowers and blue fantasy. Another interesting leaf chimera is Rob's Kalangadoo, a sport of Rob's Galiwinku. Its leaves are randomly variegated with gold flecks. The cool attribute of leaf chimeras is you don't need to wait for them to bloom to see if they have propagated true to the variety. You can admire them for their striking foliage even when out of bloom!

If you observe one of your normal trailing violets developing chimera characteristics, remove that crown and try growing it out to see if it is stable. Happy trails!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Mag's Lava Melt

Exhibited by: Marge Farrand
Hybridized by: M. Farrand
Standard

Remembering Brother Blaise

By Lynda Vaillancourt Montrose, Colorado

"Beautiful, charming, exotic, pretty, gorgeous, colorful, lovable African violets … So are these plants to me." This is how *African Violet Culture*, a brochure by Brother Blaise, S.C. (Omer Gignac) begins.

Paging through one of my first gardening books, *African Violet Book* by Helen Van Pelt Wilson, sent me on a nostalgic trip down memory lane. Tucked in the back I found an old, beige brochure, and just as a song can flash you back through the decades, the sight of this well-worn, often-consulted treatise transported me back to the time I first discovered African violets.

It was the early 1970s and I owned exactly one African violet. I had purchased it on a crisp autumn afternoon when its flowers caught my eye while walking by a florist shop window in downtown Providence, R.I. Unlike other growers, I was not introduced to African violets by my grandmother or a kindly old aunt. My mother always seemed to have a few leaves rooting in various containers on our windowsills but I can't remember her having an actual plant! I'd killed many a houseplant in my early attempts at horticulture but this violet was so beautiful I had to give it a try. The little trooper not only survived but thrived in a sunny east window.

Meeting Brother Blaise

As I look back, my true love affair with African violets didn't seriously take off until I met a very special man, Brother Blaise, a Brother of the Sacred Heart who lived and worked in the brothers' New England schools before retiring to their Provincial House in Pascoag, R.I. You remember some teachers throughout your life, and Brother Blaise was one such teacher — one who revealed to me the true potential of this amazing houseplant.

I don't remember how I met Brother Blaise, but my first trip to his greenhouse (he called it his phytotron) engendered a lasting memory. My lowly florist shop violet only hinted at the possibilities. Walking into Brother Blaise's phytotron, my eyes feasted on a sea of vibrant green covered with blossoms of pink, purple, blue and white. Their size was unbelievable to me; some were 24 inches across. Brother Blaise proudly lifted one after another to show their perfection while extolling the attributes of each individual plant. One exceptional violet named White Pride had almost 200 open blossoms, and the love he had for these plants was more than obvious. This was no factory greenhouse churning out nondescript violets for a mass market; this was an artist creating living beauty.

The brochure Brother Blaise gave me covered all the basics for growing African violets under lights, including his formula for the perfect soil (which I have never had the temerity to try to duplicate), and his advice is as sound today as it was 50 years ago. His philosophy for growing violets was simple: Of first importance was light, then soil, followed by humidity and "last but not least, TLC." I feel TLC best summed up his success with violets and I would like to quote some of that section now.

This was an artist creating living beauty.

Words of Brother Blaise

"The last but not least condition to raising violets is Tender Loving Care, TLC for short. What is tender loving care? TLC is watering your plants when it is time. …TLC is to take the suckers off when they are small, so as to have a single crown and symmetrical plant. TLC is to keep your tubes clean. TLC is to check if the plant has enough light, or too much. TLC is to keep your plant room clean. TLC, according to Doctor Baxter, who was the Guest Speaker at the New York Convention on the Sensitivity of Plants

to Humans, is to be careful of our thoughts when we are with our plants because they react to our emotions, actions and aspirations. So when you are with your violets, do not be afraid to compliment them in thought especially when you are alone, and in words when you have company by saying: 'This plant could be the queen in a violet show. See how healthy it is and perfectly symmetrical, and the shining flowers remind you of a beautiful shining night. ... Only the eyes of an infant can match this; it is called Claudia...This one could be a princess, it is named Maria.' If Doctor Baxter is right, you will make many violets very happy and maybe your dream will come true. What a great joy and achievement."

I live in Colorado now and have a respectable (and manageable) collection of African violets. Many moves, many plants lost, many changes to my life have occurred in the intervening years but African violets were always with me. Sometimes there was a horde, sometimes only a single surviving plant. Thinking of the many kind people who have given me advice over the years, Brother Blaise remains a star in my memory; he was kind and patient with a twinkle in his eye. He won many awards with his gardening expertise but I believe he will be remembered foremost as a teacher.

As I write this, I am confident Brother Blaise still is with us in spirit. Rest in peace, Brother Blaise, knowing you have touched many lives and made the world a better place one violet, and one student, at a time.

Portions of African Violet Culture *reprinted with permission.*

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Super Duper

Exhibited by: Minh Bui
Hybridized by: S. Sorano
Standard

Time to Apply for the AVSA College Scholarship

By Dr. Charles Ramser ramserwf@wf.net

For more than 16 years, The African Violet Society of America (AVSA) has offered a college scholarship program for students — undergraduate and graduate — who are studying ornamental horticulture, floriculture, plant genetics, botany or an equivalent program in an accredited college or university. The award is funded through the AVSA Boyce Edens Research Fund. One or possibly two students are selected annually, depending on fund availability. The award is generally offered for one academic year — two long semesters — at a time. Awardees may apply in successive years but will be in competition with new applicants.

Prior to application, students normally must have completed a minimum of 24 semester- or quarter-hour college credits, while maintaining at least a "B" average. Awards are based upon merit.

The **application form is available online at www.avsa.org/scholarships** or by requesting a copy from the AVSA office in Beaumont, Texas *(contact information on inside front cover).* The completed form shall be submitted via standard mail, along with an *official* transcript and two professor recommendations, to the Scholarship Selection Committee by March 1, 2019, for the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

AVSA remains dedicated to, and encourages enthusiastically, the recognition and advancement of horticultural and related study at the college level.

Here is a quote from a recent recipient: *"I value everything the AVSA stands for, and I admire those who are still so passionate about floriculture. I am forever grateful for the scholarship I received last year, and I am working my hardest this year to show you that it was put to good use. I admire this organization and your support of my education."*

Send application, official transcript and two faculty recommendations to:

Dr. Charles Ramser
2413 Martin St.
Wichita Falls, TX 76308

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

By Susan Hapner, Chairman

12916 Midfield Terrace St. Louis, MO 63146
October 1, 2018 to October 31, 2018 Total: $105

Two-tone – $25-$49
Crosstown AVC
Christine Epstein
Carolyn Epstein

Thumbprint – Under $25
Sharon Lynch
Gail Podany
Sue Ramser
Sandra Sanders

Putting Gesneriads in the Public's Eye

By Leonard Re Southern California buffboy@social.rr.com

Having grown saintpaulias and the other gesneriads for more than 30 years and being an active member of several plant societies, I can help spread the beauty and knowledge of our beloved plants in various aspects of my life.

Educating Co-workers

I am now retired, but while working, I always had several African violets and *Nematanthus* in my office. I was fortunate to have the infamous "corner office" facing the Pacific Ocean, with plenty of natural light that allowed the plants to bloom most of the year. When new employees would start in my area or when vendors visited, they invariably would ask about the plants, and would receive my 90-second lecture on what the plants were and how to care for them.

Once a year, our company would host an activity for employees, allowing them to display their favorite hobbies. Most of the ladies would have beautiful needlework or quilts on display. Most of the men would display their woodwork or metal work. Being the oddball in the group, I would bring in my favorite plants with a description of their origins, care and culture. This always generated many questions that I would answer at the water cooler or employee cafeteria for weeks on end. The monthly company magazine included a feature article on my plants. This was circulated to all 2000 employees nationwide, along with many of our clients. I answered questions and shipped plants across the country as a result of the article and to this day I still get e-mail questions from that article.

Spreading the Word

After retirement, I undertook the arduous task of "attempting" to learn how to play bridge. When I first started at the bridge club, I wore T-shirts with an emblem of either The Gesneriad Society or AVSA. Most people know what an African violet is, but few know about gesneriads and this always gives me an opportunity to spread the word. Of course, now the ladies think I am their personal plant man and I get questions about all kinds of plants!

I would bring in my favorite plants with a description of their origin, care and culture.

Another way I spread the word about gesneriads is through lectures at our club shows and several talks each year for garden clubs in Southern California. Again, most know about African violets but few know about the other gesneriads. So now I incorporate the more common gesneriads such as *Nematanthus, Episcias, Primulina* and *Streptocarpus* in all my talks and displays. Additionally, instead of accepting the speaker's fee, I usually enroll the club in both The Gesneriad Society and AVSA. By doing so, they receive publications from the national organizations that will help enhance their knowledge of gesneriads and allow me to answer follow-up questions.

Joining the Gesneriad Society is easy. Just go to the website www.gesneriadsociety.org to join. A green membership also is available with the quarterly journal *Gesneriads* delivered electronically via a high-quality PDF. Membership includes a copy of *How to Know and Grow Gesneriads*, a packet of gesneriad seeds and a wealth of information about our chapters, flower shows, publications, gesneriad resources and Seed Fund.

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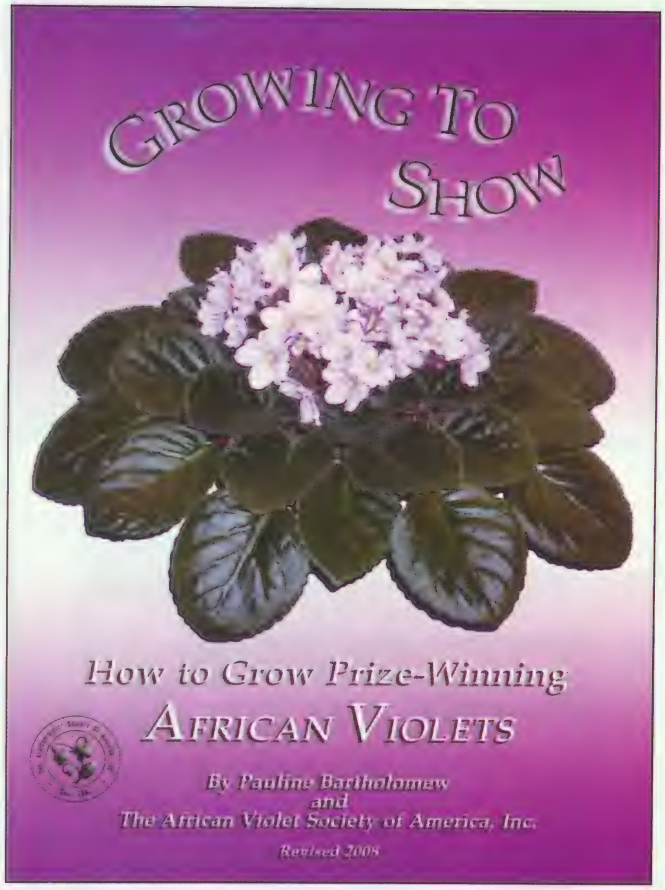

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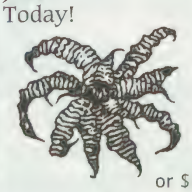

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Volume 72 Number 2

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Richard Nicholas

3113 Deerfield Dr. • Denton, TX 76208
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Things are really busy in our AVSA violet world now. I have just returned from another trip to our national office in Beaumont, Texas. Our Board of Directors has voted to authorize the Executive Committee to move forward with finding a new office location. Doing so means we need to prepare the building for potential sale. That preparation includes moving some items to a storage facility and cleaning out items we no longer need. Our work team included **Mary and Bill Corondan, Sue Ramser, Glenda and Jim Williams, Linda Turner, David and Alva Kesler, and Anne Nicholas.** My thanks to each of them for two days of hard work for AVSA. Another trip will be needed very soon!

As you have seen, our magazine has a new look. The reactions I have seen have been very positive! Some members have expressed concern that the new font is smaller — it is, by one-half point. Our editor, Teresa, is researching the impact on spacing if we increase the font size for the next issue.

Our membership continues to grow — with more than 100 new members in the past two months.

National Convention

Plans are moving along for the Houston convention and show. By the time you read this, registration for the show will be well underway, including our new online registration. I hope each member will consider attending. Whether or not you want to grow for show, an AVSA national show is just one of those things everyone should experience. There are so many plants to see, so many plants to buy, so much to learn, and so many good friends who make this event something to behold.

Good News

In the Good News Department, there is a lot to mention! Our recent fundraising campaign has passed the $20,000 mark and some late donations still are coming. These funds will help with the minor repairs to the office that will be required in order to list it for sale, as well as whatever is needed for a new office. Thanks to the many members and affiliates who donated!

Our membership continues to grow — with more than 100 new members in the past two months. Our new partnership with the Gesneriad Society to offer webinars is underway. Our partnership with the Biodiversity Heritage Library is designed to digitize back issues of *African Violet Magazine*. Scanning at the Smithsonian is about two-thirds complete. We now are filling some gaps in their collection from AVSA's back issues.

Finally, AVSA has received another large donation. Following the recent passing of our beloved **Barb Burde**, her husband, David, wanted to do something for AVSA in her memory. He has donated $30,000 to start an endowment fund that will provide earnings from interest to support AVSA's growing technology needs. The new Barbara Burde Endowment Fund will now be accepting donations in Barb's memory. AVSA meant a lot to Barb and we do really miss her! With the many tasks she tackled and contributions to her friends and to AVSA she made, Barb truly is a great example of how…

Violets Connect Us!

Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

PO Box 1828 • Ruidoso Downs, NM 88346
Email: editor@avsa.org

Spring is finally on its way, bringing warmer weather and plenty of African violet shows. See a full list of local club events beginning on page 13 and be sure to attend one close to you! Of course, the onset of spring also means we are closer to time for AVSA's national convention in Houston. In this issue of *African Violet Magazine*, we've got stories about growers who are relatively new to showing their plants and their impressions of club and national meetings. We also have a feature from Joyce Stork on Bill Foster, our treasured Shows and Judges Committee Chairman. You will enjoy reading about Bill's start in growing violets and a few surprises about his life and loves.

You will enjoy reading about Bill's start in growing violets and a few surprises about his life and loves.

AVM Design

Thank you to everyone who participated in the decision to update the design of the magazine. Many people put a lot of thought and effort into the redesign. The comments we received were overwhelmingly positive. I want to thank those of you who let us know how much you like the change, as well as those who contacted me with constructive comments.

Although more goes into how readable text is than just the size of the font, some readers with low vision expressed strong concern. As a result, we have decided to increase the font size by one-half point, to the same size it has been in past years, for the next (May/June) issue.

We based this decision on research involving reader responses, graphic design standards and estimates of how type size affects word count per page. There is only so far we can go with a type size until we sacrifice room for quality content or have to "jump" articles from one page to a later one, which is not a best practice for article flow and readability. This research and the decisions made took some time, and I had to proceed with this issue to get the magazine to you on time. Thank you again to everyone who helped.

Article Submissions and Contest

We've received some excellent articles and contest entries over the past year, and I thank all who have contributed. I encourage all readers to share your tips and expertise on growing and showing African violets (see page 49 for a few writing prompts). We've got some excellent articles lined up for May/June on designing with African violets and I look forward to lots of articles on watering, lighting and general care for growers from novice to expert levels in future issues. The 2018-2019 article contest wraps up March 1, and stay tuned for information on next year's contest. Please keep those articles coming! We will announce winners of the 2018-2019 contest at the annual convention in Houston.

Get Ready for the Convention

Speaking of Houston, it's time to register for AVSA's 73rd Consecutive Convention and Show. You'll find more information on pages 20 to 22 of this issue, including a summary of the fun and informative presentations planned. Be sure to go to the AVSA website's convention page for a full convention package, new information for exhibitors, and your discount code for a room at the beautiful Houston Marriott Westchase. In addition, you can register for the meeting online right from our website.

Office Update

By Amy Carruth

2375 North St. • Beaumont, TX 77702
Email: office@avsa.org

It's that time of year again! AVSA's 73rd Annual Convention and Show will be held May 26 to June 2, 2019, at the Houston Marriott Westchase in Houston, Texas. Our host is the Lone Star African Violet Council. There are going to be great tours and presentations. The Show and Sale will be open to the public on Friday and Saturday. I hope you will get signed up for all!

The convention information and registration is posted on the website at www.avsa.org/conventions-2019. If you are unable to print it out from the website, please give me a call at the office (409) 839-4725 and I will be more than happy to send you the information. **Please get your convention registration to the office as soon as possible.** There will be open seating at all meals.

Thank you to everyone who has donated previously to this year's show awards. If you would like to donate, please print out the online form and mail it to the office or enter it on your convention registration form.

All the affiliate insurance renewals have been mailed. If your club did not receive a renewal, contact the office and I will mail a replacement. It is very important that your club's information is correct in our records as well as on the AVSA website. I have many people call trying to find a local club near them and some of the information we have is outdated. You can easily update your information using our website (www.avsa.org/regions). Look for the Local Club Update link. Please help us keep that information correct so we can help those wanting to learn more about growing! Also, for those clubs interested in getting back issues of the magazine for their shows, we still have plenty available for just the cost of postage, which is now $13.65. They are shipped in a medium flat rate box with 20 to 30 assorted back issues enclosed.

It is very important that your club's information is correct in our records as well as on the AVSA website.

Judges, make sure you are current on your dues. With the spring shows approaching, you will want to qualify for judging.

I hope to see you all in Houston! Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at all!

AVSA Store

We have several wonderful and educational items for sale in our website store. There is a limited quantity of 2019 calendars available for $15. Perfectly Pittman is a newly released DVD featuring Hortense and Ray Pittman sharing their wealth of knowledge from 40 years of growing and hybridizing African violets. We also offer other CDs and DVDs as well as books on everything from growing to showing and managing pests. There is a flat-rate shipping charge of $5 on all orders. Check out what is available at www.avsa.org/store.

Bill Foster – An AVSA Treasure

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Bill Foster is a treasure to the African Violet Society of America. He's well known to African violet show growers, since he has been the chairman of the Shows and Judges Committee for nearly 30 years. Bill is a familiar face at AVSA conventions and certainly in his native Texas, where he has lived his entire life. But maybe you don't know him as well as you think!

Early Work

Little Billy Foster grew up in the country with "horses, cattle and farm crops." He was an honor student in school and had planned to be a teacher. But life took him in a different direction when he realized how little teachers were paid. He and a cousin tried telegraphy, then accounting, but they found that young men eligible for the draft often were not hired. Any job started looking good. "I worked as a clothes cutter in a sewing factory and as the manager in a store's shoe department. For a short while I worked as an accountant for a man who thought he had enough work for an accountant, but … he decided he didn't need me."

Finally, Bill found a way into the oil industry through family connections. "The rest of my working career was spent with Atlantic Refining Co. and after several mergers, Atlantic Richfield Co. I was there for 31 years and now my retirement check comes from British Petroleum. I had the opportunity to retire at 50 and took it. I am so glad I did. It gave me 20 years to spend with Paula and our violets and woodworking business," Bill says.

Early Loves

Paula was the love of Bill's life. "My dear, sweet Paula and I were childhood sweethearts. We met when we were six or seven. She and her parents had moved to our area and attended our church. During summer I would ride my horse up to visit her. It was a small church and most of the kids would all go to someone's home after church on Sunday. The boys who had horses rode them to church and those who didn't rode their bikes. If you had a girlfriend, she rode behind you on the horse. We only lived about two miles apart but went to different high schools. During high school we dated (when we weren't seeing someone at our own school.) We had decided when we were 12 that we would get married at some point. We did just that when we were 22. We had a daughter and a son, and it was a wonderful marriage for 48 years before she was taken from us. I miss her so much."

Bill and Paula on their honeymoon.

"Right after Paula's death, the Lone Star Council set up 'The Paula Foster Wind Beneath my Wings Award.' Paula always chose to do the work somewhat behind the scenes, thinking no one would notice, but they did. She was definitely the wind beneath my wings."

And his second early love? Remember that mention of horses? Bill has a little-known skill. "Some might not know that I am a cowboy and probably the thing I missed most by moving to the city was giving up my horses. I rode in rodeo parades every weekend during the summer and turned down a chance to travel with a group that performed 'Square Dance on Horseback' at major rodeos all over the country. My son still has my saddle and my chaps."

Bill on his mare "Merry Legs."

African Violet Love

Somewhere in Bill's mid-30s, he was given an African violet. It was healthy but wouldn't bloom. "I started reading everything I could find about violets and found right away that blooms were lacking due to a shortage of light. Paula gave me a 4-foot fixture that had grow-light bulbs. I built a stand with two shelves, one for plants and one for supplies. A nursery told me about a lady who had just opened a violet shop in my area. That lady was June Swift. I was in her shop 'most every Saturday and she taught me all about violets. I also went to Volkmann's Greenhouse and bought violets."

"A little while later, we were at the mall one night and Sears had just received a new shipment of violets. Chanticleer was on the shelf and caught Paula's eye. After that, there were two violet nuts in the house. Well, actually, three, because my son had a stand in his room until he discovered girls. All our vacations were planned to locations where we could buy new varieties; Arkansas and Missouri seemed to have a lot of those, plus a number in Texas. I could not build shelves fast enough!"

The first AVSA club Bill and Paula belonged to was First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas, which also was June Swift's club. Along the way, they belonged to six different affiliates, including two he and Paula organized.

That friendship with June Swift was important. June was a prominent hybridizer with 551 hybrids to her credit and she encouraged Bill, who now has 123 hybrids of his own.

"My first cross was made as a nonbeliever! I had read an article stating that if you used pollen from a pure strain blossom, you would get the color of the pollen parent on all the seedlings. I just didn't much believe this, so I took pollen from a dark blue Rhapsodie and put it on Mary C (2674), which had a big pink blossom. Sure enough, every seedling was the same color as the pollen parent.

"I named one plant from that cross. I named it 'Merrill' and presented it to Merrill Schneider, who was the first president of the Alpha AVS, at her installation. ... I loved Billy Blue (3998) and Sweet Paula (4000), but the one that has won more all over the country was Bertha (6159) from 1986. It was a top Best in Show winner for two years. June Swift was my mentor all along."

In his very first show, Bill entered seven plants and came home with five blue ribbons, two red, and three best in class — the first of many awards to come. He also exhibited underwater designs successfully.

When asked what part of the hobby is most enjoyable Bill replies, "I enjoy anything that has to do with violets. I enjoy hybridizing and plan to do some more of that. What I like least is watering them. Paula loved to do that. I loved to repot, groom, take up babies, etc. Paula always had each plant on its own wick pot. She would get down on the floor and scoot around just watering and grooming for hours. At this stage in my life, if I got down on the floor, I'd have to scoot around and find something to pull myself up."

> I had the opportunity to retire at 50 and took it.

Love of AVSA

In 1990, Mary Boland appointed Bill to be the chairman of the AVSA Shows and Judges Committee. He had been on that committee for the previous five years and was the AVSA Affiliate Chairman before that. "Being S&J chair is a lot of work and has required having several file cabinets to store all the records. In spite of all the work, I have enjoyed it. A lot of changes have been made. First and foremost, I have always had good committee members. Every request that I ever received was brought before my committee and no changes were made without a majority approval."

Bill served as president of AVSA from 1999 to 2001. "I was just looking at the wall in my office. I cherish anything to do with AVSA, and I noticed that right along with my Honorary Life Certificate and my Distinguished Service Award is the award that was presented to me at the Omaha convention in 2000 appointing me as an Admiral of the Great Navy of Nebraska, signed and sealed by Governor Mike Johnson."

In 2010 he was inducted into the AVSA Hall of Fame. "I was blown away. I was at a loss for words. Most would think I would never be at a loss for words. All I remember saying was that it was the greatest honor I had ever received, and I knew Paula was looking down and was proud."

Along the way, Bill made friends. "How can I narrow it down to just a few? Mary Boland was such a dear friend and I miss seeing her so much. When I broke my leg [at the 2005 Cincinnati Convention,] I received so many cards and phone calls. Ron Davidson went to the hospital with me. Meredith Hall came and sat with me. When my daughter and I flew home after my week there, a caravan was waiting to see that I got home. All the time after the surgery Ron Davidson would show up, load my wheelchair, and make sure I didn't miss any of my meetings. When Richard Nicholas asked the oldest attendants to stand [at the 2018 Buffalo convention], there was Janet Riemer, Nancy Hayes and me. That is when you realize how many you have lost, and it can bring a tear to your eye."

Bill congratulating Ron Davidson, 2015 Paula Foster Award recipient. Photo by Glenda Williams.

"I have enjoyed all the friends I have made through AVSA over the years and I truly hope I can make a few more conventions. I love you all."

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

By Susan Hapner, Chairman

12916 Midfield Terrace St. Louis, MO 63146
November to December 2018 Total $220

Multicolor—$50 – $99
April Van Ness

Two-Tone—$25 – $49
AVC of Greater Kansas City
Liz Dickson
In memory of Janis Goode
Linda Stinnette
In memory of Celeste Cirkl

Thumbprint—Under $25
Nellie Reese
Bonita Echterling
Carolyn Hayward
Gloria Vanderhorst
Mary Ann Moreno
Renee Juillard
Victoria J. Hartmann

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Optimara Rose Quartz

Exhibited by: Sandra Skalski
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Miniature

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Hortense Pittman — Celina, TX

'Hortense's Country Rose'
•(11123) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble fuchsia pansy/white edge.
•Variegated medium green and white. •Miniature.

'Jolly Fairy'
•(11124) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Double pink two-tone/green edge.
•Dark green, pointed. •Semiminiature.

'Jolly Fun'
•(11125) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble-double rose pansy/white edge.
•Dark green, plain. •Miniature.

'Jolly Glitter'
•(11126) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble lavender pansy/purple fantasy.
•Dark green, plain. •Miniature.

'Jolly Glory'
•(11127) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble pink pansy/variable white edge.
•Medium green, plain, serrated. •Semiminiature.

'Jolly Imp'
•(11128) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Double pink pansy/green edge.
•Dark green, plain, pointed. •Miniature.

'Jolly Jingle'
•(11129) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble pink pansy/darker eye, white edge.
•Dark green, plain. •Miniature.

'Jolly Lulu'
•(11130) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Single white sticktite bell/purple eye.
•Medium-dark green, plain, pointed. •Miniature.

'Jolly Moonflower'
•(11131) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Double white/yellow and pink markings.
•Dark green, plain. •Semiminiature.

'Jolly Red'
•(11132) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Single-semidouble red frilled pansy.
•Medium green, serrated. •Semiminiature.

'Jolly Star'
•(11133) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Single pink sticktite pansy/darker eye.
•Dark green, plain, pointed. •Semiminiature.

'Jolly Sun Chaser'
•(11134) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Double white and yellow.
•Dark green, plain, serrated. •Semiminiature.

'Jolly Wine-O'
•(11135) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Single-semidouble wine pansy.
•Dark green, plain, serrated. •Semiminiature.

'Sassy Joy'
•(11136) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Single rose-pink sticktite pansy.
•Variegated dark green and cream, plain. •Semiminiature.

'Sassy Night'
•(11137) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble blue pansy.
•Variegated medium green and white. •Miniature.

'Sassy Sue'
•(11138) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble pink two-tone pansy.
•Variegated dark green and white, plain. •Semiminiature.

'Sparkled Jewel'
•(11139) 10/29/2018 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble lavender-pink pansy/purple fantasy.
•Variegated dark green and cream. •Miniature.

Jere Trigg — Spanish Fort, AL

'Jere's Roll Tide'
•(11140) 11/07/2018·J. Trigg
•Single chimera red sticktite pansy/white stripe.
•Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted, glossy. Standard.

Gregory Ross — San Antonio, TX

'Carmel's Antique Porcelain'
•(11141) 11/24/2018·G. Ross
•Semidouble blush-pink ruffled pansy/maroon-veined band, variable green edge.
•Dark green, heart-shaped, quilted, ruffled/red back.
•Standard.

'Carmel's Rare Jewel'
•(11142) 11/24/2018 •G. Ross
•Single plum sticktite pansy/white ruffled edge.
•Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted, serrated/red back. •Standard.

'Carmel's Summer Sky'
•(11143) 11/24/2018 •G. Ross
•Semidouble light blue two-tone pansy/white ruffled edge.
•Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Senior Judges: Important Notice

By Barbara Werness • bwerness@comcast.net • 763-754-3918

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2019. Here's how:

Send the request to **Barbara Werness, 12354 Naples Street NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**
•Include a check for $5 payable to AVSA and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, 2016 edition, page 83.
•Cash, personal check or cashier's checks are acceptable. Note: Sorry, but Canadian postal money orders no longer can be accepted.

You may receive the examination by email as a Microsoft Word document. If not received, follow up within two weeks. If you require a hard copy by postal mail, allow up to three weeks for delivery. Please specify email or hard copy.

A **printed hard copy** (*not* electronic copy via email) of the exam must be returned to Barbara Werness by October 1, 2019, for grading.

Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination can send a request and $5 check payable to AVSA to Barbara Werness.

Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per the AVSA Handbook:
1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedule of five AVSA shows judged (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient.)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned per the AVSA Handbook, 2016 Edition, Page 83.

Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2019, will be returned and application may be made next year.

No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2019. Please include email address and you will be notified of receipt of your exam or include a self-addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

Put some *Violet Fun* in 2019!!

AVSA Convention & Show

May 26 - June 2, 2019

Houston Marriott Westchase

Violet Fun in Houston, Texas

Houston is a top vacation option for its affordability, outstanding restaurants, museums, science, arts, parks - and even art in parks!

Plan now to *Have Fun in the Texas Sun* in Houston, Texas

Coming Events

March 1–3 — Central California
Central California African Violet Society
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Home and Garden Show of Fresno
Fresno Fair Grounds
1121 S. Chance Ave
Fresno, CA
Friday: 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Lola Sutherland: 559-906-7366
lolasutherland1@gmail.com
fresnoviolets.org

March 2-3 — Colorado
Rocky Mountain African Violet Council
Show and Sale
Tagawa Gardens
7711 So. Parker Rd.
Centennial, CO
Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m-3 p.m.
Trudy Brekel: 303-452-9015
love4violets@yahoo.com

March 2 —Texas
Spring Branch African Violet Club
2019 Spring African Violet Plant Sale
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Drive
Houston, TX
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Cynthia Severson: 281-682-1073
cseverson57@comcast.net

March 9 — California
South Coast AVS
Judged Show/Sale
South Coast Botanic Garden
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA
11 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Culture class 10:30 a.m.
Jacquie Eisenhut: 310-325-2993
jaceis905@gmail.com

March 16 — Arizona
Tucson African Violet Society
61st Show and Sales
Golden Pin Lanes
1010 West Miracle Mile
Tucson, AZ
10 a.m.-5p.m.
Kathy Bell: 520-574-1367
bellkk@peoplepc.com
tucsonavs.com

March 16 — Texas
First Austin African Violet Society
Spring Plant Display and Sale
Austin Area Garden Center
Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Rd.
Austin, TX
10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Susan Kautz: 512-365-1818
gizzmo@austin.rr.com
faavs.org

March 23–24 — Illinois
Chicago Botanic Garden
1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, IL
10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. both days
Susan Bradford: asusan.bradford@abbvie.com

March 23–24 — New York
Sweetwater African Violet Society Show
West Sayville Fire Dept. Auditorium
80 Main St
West Sayville, NY
Saturday: 2 p.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday: noon-4 p.m.
Mary K. Chelton: 631-286-4255
mchelton@optonline.net

March 29–30 — Florida
Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society
Annual Judged Show and Sale
San Jose Church of Christ
6233 San Jose Blvd
Jacksonville, FL
Friday: noon–5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Sharon Gartner: svioletlady@yahoo.com
jacksonvilleviolets.org

March 29–30 — Texas
Dallas Metro African Violet Society
Mini-show and Spring Sale
North Haven Gardens
7700 Northaven
Dallas, TX
10 a.m.–4 p.m. daily
Workshops 10 a.m.–2 p.m. daily
Bill Foster: 1bpfoster@sbcglobal.net
Sylvia Leeds: roseotx@gmail.com
Barbara Kelly: violetgirl6771@sbcglobal.net

March 30 — Arizona
Copper State African Violet Club
Club's First Show and Sale
Pyle Adult Recreation Center
655 East Southern Ave.
Tempe, AZ
Noon-4 p.m.
Candace Baldwin: 480-213-4247
copperstateavc@gmail.com
copperstateavc.com

March 30 — Michigan
Michigan State African Violet Club
Display and Sale
Matthaei Botanical Gardens
1800 Dixboro Road
Ann Arbor, MI
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Free workshop 11 a.m.
Lynn Allen: LynnAllen0413@comcast.net

March 30-31 — Texas
Moonlight African Violet & Gesneriad Society
Sale
Fort Worth Botanic Garden
3220 Botanic Garden Blvd.
Fort Worth, TX
8 a.m.-5 p.m. both days
Kathy Leach: 817-703-6566
kbobl@sbcglobal.net

April 5-6 — Alabama
Early Bird Violet Club of Birmingham
Show and Sale
Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Conference Room
Friday: 2 p.m.-4 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Gwen Johnson: 205-903-3901

April 5-7 — California
Capital City African Violet Society
Sale and Display
Sacramento Garden and Art Center
3330 McKinley Blvd
Sacramento, CA
Saturday: 1 p.m.- 4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kathy Norton: kathy.norton@mac.com

April 5-7 — Virginia
Richmond African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
1800 Lakeside Avenue
Richmond, VA
Friday: Sale, 1-5 p.m.
Saturday: 1-5 p.m., Sale 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Sale 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Barbara Greenawalt: 804-755-7434
Barbgreenawalt@hotmail.com
richmondavs.wordpress.com

April 6 — Connecticut
Thimble Islands African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Willoughby Wallace Library
146 Thimble Islands Rd., Exit #56
Branford, CT
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Madeline Clem: 203-481-9455
mycbuzzard@aol.com

April 6 — Connecticut
Windsor African Violet Society
Annual Judged Show & Sale
Grace Episcopal Church
311 Broad St.
Windsor, CT
8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Nancy Hayes: 860-242-0162
violetnancy@comcast.net
windsorafricanviolets.org/

April 6-7 — New Jersey
African Violet Club of Morris County
AVSA Show & Plant Sale
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
353 East Hanover Ave.
Morristown, NJ
Saturday: 1:30 pm-4:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Jill Fischer: 908-464-4417
HF.JG.Fischer@comcast.net

April 12-13 — Minnesota
Minnesota African Violet Society of America
Annual Show and Plant Sale
Northtown Mall, court near Best Buy
398 Northtown Dr.
Blaine, MN
Friday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Patricia Mattson: 715-472-2734
horsehappy@lakeland.ws
Jude Neumann: 651-433-2708
judeneumann@frontiernet.net

April 13 — Delaware
Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society
Display and Plant Sale
Boscov's Department Store
Christiana Town Center
Route 273
Christiana, DE
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Bobbie LaFashia: rlafash@comcast.net
www.DAVGS.org

April 13 — Missouri
Sho-Me African Violet Club
Show/Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
51st and Wornall
Kansas City, MO
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Lynn Canning: lcanning@sbcglobal.net

April 13 — New York
African Violet & Gesneriad Society of Rochester
Display & Sale
Solstice Senior Living
55 Ayrault Rd.
Fairport, NY
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Stacey Davis: 585-426-5665
Stacey.Davis@rit.edu
www.avgsr.org/

April 13–14 — Ohio
Columbus African Violet Society
Annual Show and Sale
Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
1777 East Broad St.
Columbus, OH
Saturday: Show noon–5 p.m.; Sale 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Madelyn Sechler: mjsechler@gmail.com
Donna Vogelpohl: donnav8452@columbus.rr.com
ColumbusAfricanVioletSociety.org

April 14 — Ontario
Toronto African Violet and Gesneriad Society
Annual Show and Sale
Toronto Botanical Garden
Floral Hall
777 Lawrence Avenue East
Toronto (North York), Ontario
9 a.m.–4 p.m.
tavgs.ca

April 20–21 — New Mexico
Albuquerque African Violet Club
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Albuquerque Garden Center
10120 Lomas Blvd.
Albuquerque, NM
Saturday: 2 p.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Sharon Shannon: 505-865-0171
sshannon2@swcp.com
AlbuquerqueAfricanVioletClub.org

April 26-27 — Tennessee
Memphis African Violet Society
Judged Show and Sale
Central Christian Church
531 S. McLean at Peabody
Memphis, TN
Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Marian Zoller: 901-372-0283
marigregz@gmail.com
Beth Baker: 901-278-7860
bakerbethrn@gmail.com
facebook.com/memphisavs

April 27 — California
Central Coast AV Society
Show & Sale
Brookdale Senior Living
1919 Creston Rd
Paso Robles, CA
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Mary Thompson: 805-459-6070
znailady1@aol.com

April 27–28 — New York
African Violet & Gesneriad Society of Syracuse
Show & Plant Sale
Beaver Lake Nature Center
8477 East Mud Lake Road
Baldwinsville, NY
Saturday: 1 p.m.-6 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Jim Wildman: Jimviolets@verizon.net
Barbara Leonard: Barbara.Leonard.@twc.com

April 27–28 — New York
Capital District African Violet Society
African Violet Show & Sale
St. Matthew's Catholic Church
25 Mountainview St.
Voorheesville, NY
Saturday: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: noon-4 p.m.
Dorothy Raymond: 518-229-2880
dorothyraymond60@gmail.com
Capital AVS on Facebook

April 27–28 — Ohio
Cincinnati African Violet Society and African Violet Society of Dayton
Annual Show and Sale
Eastgate Mall
4601 Eastgate Blvd.
Cincinnati, OH
Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Penny Wichman: 859-240-9057
pennypwic@aol.com
avsdayton.com or cinciavs.org

April 27 — Ontario
Lakeshore African Violet Society
Annual Show and Sale
St. Philip's Lutheran Church
61 West Deane Park Dr.
Etobicoke, Ontario
9 a.m.–4 p.m.
www.lakeshoreavs.com

April 27 — Oregon
Portland African Violet Club Sale
Tabor Heights Methodist Church
6161 SE Stark St.
Portland, OR
10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Alice Wagner: 503-631-3925
alicemaeblue@yahoo.com

April 27-28 — Virginia
Tidewater African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Norfolk Botanical Gardens
6700 Azalea Garden Rd.
Norfolk, VA
Saturday: 1-5 p.m.; Sale 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Pat Knight: kemts@cox.net

April 27 — Washington
Seattle AVS and Puget Sound Gesneriad Society
Judged Show and Sale
Good Shepherd Center/Wallingford Senior Center
4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Room 140
Seattle, WA
Sale 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Show noon-4p.m.
Cathleen Graves: 253-535-5973
rhythemslave@harbornet.com

May 3-5 — Pennsylvania
African Violet Society of Springfield, Delaware County
Annual Show and Sale
Springfield Mall, Lower Level, Center Court
1250 Baltimore Pike
Springfield, PA
Friday: 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Saturday: noon-8:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Alice Dulaney: adulaney@verizon.net
Linda M. Kilby: DrLinda97@gmail.com

May 4 — New Jersey
Garden State African Violet Club
67th Annual African Violet Show & Plant Sale
MCCC Horticulture Program at
Mercer County Community College
Student Center
1200 Old Trenton Rd.
West Windsor, NJ
Noon-4 p.m.
gsavcmail@gmail.com
Facebook: Garden State African Violet Club

May 4–5 — New York
African Violet & Gesneriad Society of Western New York
Show and Sale
Travel the World
Walden Galleria Mall
1 Walden Galleria
Buffalo, NY
Saturday: noon–5 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Judy O'Neil: 716-662-9434
Judyoneil1945@gmail.com

May 4-5 — Wisconsin
Oshkosh Violet Society
African Violet Show & Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall
531 Knapp St.
Oshkosh, WI
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kevin Degner: 920-426-3764
kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net

May 10 — Montana
Billings Bloomers African Violet Club
Annual African Violet Sale
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
180 24th St. West
Billings, MT
10 a.m.-4 p.m
406-850-9776; 656-2694; or 652-1388
sassysmom@hotmail.com

May 11 — New Jersey
African Violet Club of Burlington County
Annual Show and Sale
Medford Leas Retirement Community
1 Medford Leas Way
Medford, NJ
Noon-5 p.m.
Susan Arnao: searnao@aol.com

May 11 — Wisconsin
Crosstown AVC
Annual Spring Sale
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Jerry VandeBerg: 608-274-2734
jerrygema@att.net

Meet the AVM Editorial Board

Winston J. Goretsky

Winston J. Goretsky is a native of Calgary, Alberta. He has been a member of AVSA since 1982, a Life Member since 1986, a Senior Judge since 1994 and became a Judge's Teacher in 2002. In October 2008, Winston became a Master Judge. He was appointed to the AVSA Shows & Judges committee in 2007 and has served on the Publications, Convention, Technology and Handbook committees; he was AVSA President from 2015 to 2017.

A Life Member of the African Violet Society of Canada, Winston has served as a director for several years, president from 2000 to 2002, and as treasurer since 2005. He also is a life member of the Gesneriad Society, an Advanced Gesneriad Judge, director, and holds the new office of first vice president (2019 to 2021). He has served on many committees over a number of years, and is an active member of the Stampede City African Violet Society.

Winston has been photographing local affiliate and convention African violet shows in both Canada and the United States for many years. He became the official AVSA Show Photographer for *African Violet Magazine* in 1996 and his photographs are published regularly in "Chatter," the quarterly journal of the African Violet Society of Canada, along with other horticultural magazines, calendars and publications, including the Gesneriad Society journal.

Winston's love for African violets began as a youth and was encouraged by his grandmother, Lena Berkech, who gave him his first African violet. He has been growing African violets and gesneriads since about 1974 and loves to encourage others by sharing his knowledge of and enthusiasm for his favorite plant.

Winston has been a computer professional for more than 30 years and works as a systems specialist. He and his wife Laurel have two children: Emily, 19, and Carter, 17. The entire family shares an enthusiasm for plants.

New Club Members Who Grow for Show: Nate Cave

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, NY

The African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Western New York was founded in 1952. I have been a member since 1965. During those years, many members have come and gone: new ones, those returning, and many who leave, as well. All our AVSA affiliates appear to be in the same predicament of wanting and needing new, younger members who will become and then remain active. These new members are needed to ensure the energy necessary to maintain the continued success of our clubs.

Two years ago, our club was fortunate enough to add a new, young member when Nate Cave joined. What a pleasure to meet a young man so keen on this hobby! I had the privilege of interviewing Nate for this article.

Early Interest

Nate attributes his interest in African violets to his grandmother. He showed me a photo of her with several large plants on her coffee table. How well he remembers her nurturing and the instructions she shared with him as a young child. Nate still has two of his grandmother's plants growing well on his kitchen windowsill. Those first plants were entrusted to his care about 30 years ago, and he has been growing ever since. He has shared leaf cuttings of those early plants with African violet friends across the United States.

Nate remembers one plant in particular that had holly leaves. We wondered if there still were any varieties available today with this type of foliage. Together we bemoaned the loss of so many types of foliage in preference of the flat-growing show foliage so coveted today. To collect all of the "Original 10" is a goal of Nate's as well. (He requested that I publish his email address should anyone wish to share: caven1981@gmail.com).

Growing and Showing with AVSA

Nate joined AVSA as a gift to himself on his 35th birthday. Shortly after that, he found information on the local club and attended a meeting. He was welcomed and has been a loyal, contributing member since. He says, "I find it fun to grow for show!" That fun was manifested in Nate winning Best in Show at our 2017 show! He entered one plant and won the show. Now, that's a good grower! Also remarkable was that the winning plant was a vintage violet called Granger Gardens' Ebb Tide.

Nate with his first Best in Show award, in 2017.

Nate mentions several things he has learned after joining the local club he likes to share with others, including that you should learn to grow for show, and be courageous in trashing plants that will not grow well for you. "Let them go," is Nate's advice. "There are too many others out there to try."

Hybridizing Is a New Passion

His growing and showing philosophy has found its way into Nate's hybridizing efforts, a pursuit that has become quite interesting to this grower. He has four hybrids currently in trial that are the result of a cross between those two plants tracing back to his grandmother. He also has 20 seedlings under scrutiny from a cross between 8E-Crocodile and Granger's Carnival. High hopes prevail, and Nate eventually would like to produce a plant with well-behaved, variegated, girl foliage sporting double red blossoms. It's quite the challenge, I must say. His dedication and tenacity might just lead to him accomplishing that goal. Dale Martens recommended that, due to his restricted growing area, he plant only a few seeds at a time from each cross, which is good advice!

Presently, Nate and his husband, Chris, live in a beautiful old home in the city of Lockport, New York. They have purchased property out in the country and plan to build a new home soon. Nate's hopes for the future are to have everything plant-related in one place — on one floor — as opposed to all over the house as things are today.

You can see in the photo that Nate's main growing area is in a closet, with shelves under lights, the door left open, and a fan running on low speed. There are plants all over the house, however, filling the windowsills and enjoying their various locations. It's easy to tell that someone lives there who loves to grow!

Nate's current growing area.

Choosing a Plant for Show

Is this your first time to exhibit an African violet or other gesneriad in a local or the national show? How do you decide which of your plants will make the cut and get some extra blooming and grooming attention in the weeks leading up to the show?

Here are a few tips:

•As with all growing, choose varieties you like.

•Choose plants that fit into a few different sections of the show schedule.

•Select one of your double-blossom varieties; these flowers last longer.

•Select prolific bloomers with multiple blossoms per peduncle.

•Check the plant's center to see if it looks healthy and is free of insects.

•Choose a mature plant with a nice leaf pattern showing overlapping petioles with no spaces between leaves (you should not be able to see through to the soil).

•Remember that having a larger plant with more leaves is less important than symmetrical, healthy, mature leaves (so long as you meet minimum size requirements for the section).

Adapted from: 10 Basic Principles in Growing Show Plants by Mary Stallings (November-December 2000) and Grooming for Show … Groom as you Grow by Kurt Jablonski (November-December 2016).

Convention —

Join Your AVSA Friends in Houston!

Come experience horticultural excellence, meet new and old friends and enjoy educational presentations in the culture and ambience of the fourth-largest city in the United States: Houston, Texas. This wonderful week of activities begins on Monday, May 25, and ends Saturday night, June 1, 2019.

Each person who attends the AVSA Convention and Show can tailor the days of the week to your own personal interests and needs. If you want to take tours of the area, arrive by Tuesday. We have tours scheduled for Galveston's Moody Gardens, Space Center Houston and a half-day driving tour of Houston. Check the AVSA website (www.avsa.org/conventions-2019) for details.

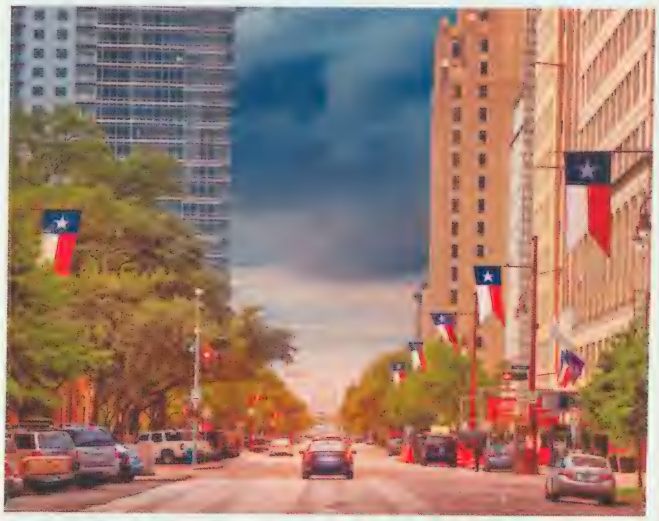
If you are both an AVSA member and have registered for the convention, be sure to arrive Wednesday in time to enter your plants in the judged competition and attend the convention opening session on Wednesday evening. The next day, Thursday, includes presentations, show judging, the opening of an incredible sales room, the opening banquet in the evening and the opening of the show to convention attendees.

Don't forget to add a day or more for vacationing in the area.

On Friday, folks will enjoy more presentations, the gorgeous showroom, the salesroom and multiple other fun convention activities. On Friday and Saturday, non-convention guests can enjoy both the showroom and salesroom for a daily minimum fee. Convention attendees will enjoy a full day of fun on Saturday with the grand finale banquet and closing of the show.

Don't forget to add a day or more for vacationing in the area. Houston has phenomenal museums, cuisine and tourist attractions, and is only an hour from historic Galveston Island on the Gulf of Mexico.

This annual AVSA convention is like a family reunion and is a week-long African violet celebration. Plan now to spend some special time in Houston the last week of May through the first of June 2019.



Enjoy a driving tour of Houston.

Online Convention Information

Beginning in 2010, AVSA began publishing convention details online instead of in AVM so we could continue to fill the magazine's pages with plenty of content on growing our beloved plants. All of the convention details are on our website, but if you aren't online, call the office (844-400-2872) for a mailed copy of convention information.

In addition, this is the first year you can register for the convention online. If that simply won't work for you, contact the office at 844-400-2872 or by email (office@avsa.org) for a registration packet.

Preview of 2019 AVSA Convention Presentations

Make plans now to learn and grow at the AVSA 2019 Convention and Show. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, we've got plenty of presentations all about growing and showing African violets, including:

From Propagation to Show Time—Ken Muzalewski
Ken shares growing techniques and integrated pest management for African violets from propagation to show.

Kitchen Tissue Culture—Sharon Gartner
Sharon gives tips on how to propagate your own chimera violets from flower stems with a kitchen culture kit.

Will My Violet Grow in the Texas Sun?—Dr. Jeff Smith
Dr. Smith will bring African violet care back to the basics of plant physiology. The goal of this session is to apply basic plant science for common-sense techniques to growing African violets.

Designs With an Edge—B.J. Ohme
Last year's winner of Best Design covers tips, tricks and techniques for creating winning designs. The presentation will be of interest to designers and judges.

Sex Sells—Steve Covolo
Steve will take you through the steps of plant sex specific to African violets and how to use this knowledge in hybridizing.

Be sure to include these great presentations in your personal convention and show schedule. See dates, time and more details about our 2019 presentations on the AVSA website: www.avsa.org/conventions-2019.

Have You or Your Club Donated to The Awards Fund?

It's not too late to donate, but time is running out! Award donations must be in by April 13. We have received, and will take donations from, individuals, clubs and societies. We have not heard from many of our states. Clubs in three countries — Canada, Japan and Russia — have made it a point to donate.

We need your award donation. Your donation enables us to reward the hard work of fellow African violet growers.

Find an award donation form and summary of 2019 awards on our website: www.avsa.org/conventions-2019.

Annual Convention —

Luncheon Auction

By Edna Rourke • 99 Old Stratford Road • Shelton, CT 06484-6129

Phone: 203-926-9716 • Email: Apapillon@aol.com

Can you believe convention time is fast approaching? And it is sure to be a wonderful one! It's also time to start thinking about the Luncheon Auction. All our past luncheon success has been due to the very generous donations of our members, both amateur and commercial. Let's make this auction truly special; I know with your help, this will be the best one yet.

We have many generous, as well as talented, members. I hope you will consider donating a violet-related or craft item to the auction either as an individual member or as a club. Donations of anything violet related or of a rare, unique or unusual nature will be gratefully accepted. These donations make the auction possible.

To our commercial members, hybridizers both here and abroad, I extend an invitation to donate either supplies or newly introduced plant material. Your donations are always so important to our auction and make for some lively bidding.

As always, we will acknowledge all donations and contributors with a listing on the luncheon tables.

Please either call or email me and let me know if you plan to make a donation or want to help in some way. I can be reached by calling 203-926-9716 or by sending me an email at Apapillon@aol.com. I'd really like to have the opportunity to speak with you.

Many thanks for your continued help and support. Let's make this our best auction ever!

I look forward to hearing from you soon. See you in Houston!

AVSA 2019 Annual Convention Souvenir Book Ads

This year's convention is in Houston, Texas, May 26 to June 2, 2019. The theme is "Violet Fun in the Texas Sun."

We invite you to advertise in our Convention Souvenir Book. The souvenir book ads help defray costs. Ads can be well-wishes or advertising. This is an excellent way to promote your organization.

The maximum size of a full-page ad is 8 inches high x 5 inches wide; a half-page ad is 4 inches high x 5 inches wide; and a quarter-page ad is 2 inches high x 5 inches wide. The rates for the ads are: quarter-page for $30, half-page $50, and a full-page ad is $90. All inside ads will be in black and white. We also offer three full-page ads placed on the inside front cover, inside back cover and outside back cover for $125, printed in black and white, or $150, printed in color. Only cover pages can be in color.

To purchase an ad, please contact Jim Williams, Souvenir Book Chair, 829 Old Highway 20, Unit A, McDade, TX 78650; email: jimsviolets@gmail.com. The deadline for all ads is April 15, 2019. Camera-ready copy is preferred (PDF or Word doc or jpg file). Find forms or more information at www.avsa.org/conventions-2019.

Checks or money orders in U.S. dollars should be made payable, and sent, to Vickie Crider, Houston Convention Treasurer, 6922 Sunflower Grove Drive, Humble, TX 77346.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Jolly Lilac

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Miniature

An Analysis of Violet Pots

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

They're small, but so essential to growing. Joyce Stork has compiled a thorough list of basic information to help new and experienced growers sort out their potting needs and decisions.

The purpose of a pot is to:

•Mimic the natural root environment found in the native location in Africa.
•Make growing efficient and convenient.
•Control environmental factors of water, disease, light, salts, temperature, etc.
•Achieve the desired growth or habit.

Basic Considerations

•Opaque to minimize light on roots
◦Discourages algae growth
◦Mimics natural environment of darkness for roots
•Clean
◦Free of dirt
◦Free of bacteria/fungi
◦Free of salt buildup
•Safe edge for plants that touch the rim
◦Should not damage petioles (leaf stems) when in contact
◦Can be rolled/blunted/broad
◦Protect from salt buildup
•Shape
◦Flared for easily slipping plant out of the pot when ready
◦Bottom designed to suit grower's setup preferences
•Might need indentation for air circulation
•Might need flat bottom for physical contact with matting
•Sized correctly
◦Diameter and depth should match the size of the plant's root growth
◦In African violets, the roots of a fully mature standard plant typically are about one-third the leaf span
◦Other gesneriads might vary according to the type of root structure
◦Should allow for growth as desired by grower and within the plant's capability
◦Should restrict growth when space is limited or to stimulate flowering
◦Avoid excessively large pot because it:
-Wastes potting mix.
-Tends to encourage vegetative growth without flowering.
-Allows saturated soil (devoid of roots) and might lead to rotting.
•Stable
◦Should not readily tip over in a breeze, with vibration or a bump, or around pets
◦Especially important if growing tall, erect, top-heavy, or massive specimens
◦Choosing the smallest pot possible that won't fall over is believed to maximize bloom and conserve space and potting mix
•Drainage
◦To allow excess water to escape
◦To remove fertilizer salts from the root area (leaching)
◦If no drainage exists, grower will have to compensate by:
-Adapting potting medium, such as by adding a perlite layer or extra porous potting mix.
-Watchful watering.
-Frequent repotting.
•Composition
◦Clay
-Works well in excessive heat because evaporation from sides has cooling effect
-Good for growers with excessive watering habits
-Weight makes it stable but less easy to transport
-Gives a quaint decorator appearance
-Salts might build up on rim and sanitation can be difficult
-Evaporation makes it unsuitable for wick-watering

◦Plastic
-Good in moderate temperatures
-Inexpensive
-Available in many sizes (including recycled or repurposed containers)
-Easy to keep clean
-Best for wick watering or mat watering
-Lightweight makes it easy to transport to sell or show
-Utilitarian appearance might not be suitable in some locations
◦Ceramic
-Upscale decorator appearance
-More expensive
-More useful at hiding less attractive pot than for actual potting
-What is Available?

Specialty Pots

•2-part ceramic self-watering
◦Very decorative pots, primarily available for standard-size violets
◦Somewhat unpredictable, depending on the clay that was used in manufacturing
◦Somewhat expensive
◦Lack drainage, which allows salts to build up in the roots
◦Expect to repot into fresh porous potting mix once per year

•Oyama planters
◦Plastic pot system designed to provide ideal soil moisture for violet roots
◦Sold in several sizes and moderately inexpensive
◦Water reservoir is hidden inside pot
◦Special potting technique needed, which includes a substantial layer of perlite at the bottom of the inner pot (see www.reedsgreenhouse.com/oyama.html)
◦Can be used in AVSA horticultural exhibits

•Dandy pots
◦Decorative colorful plastic pots designed to sit on top of matching reservoir
◦Sold in several sizes at moderate prices
◦Wick-watering system
◦Requires potting mix with good porosity

Each grower will make different choices. Which pot fits your budget and is best for your needs?

AVSA Booster Fund

By Dianna Walston

2210 S. Courtland Ave. Kokomo, IN 46902
October to December 2018 Total $305

Multicolor—$50 – $99
Maggie Flynn, Santa Rosa, CA
Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN
North Star AV Council in memory of Ruth Bann
Sandra Skalski, Mullica Hill, NJ

Two-Tone—$25 – $49
Kyle Coleman, Fort Worth, TX
Glenda Curry, Roanoke, TX
First AVS of Denton in lieu of speaker's fee for Ben Hanning
Alice A. Inlow, Ballwin, MO
In memory of John Cook

Thumbprint—Under $25
Donna C. Henderson, Birmingham, AL
Janice Penny, Huntington Beach, CA
Linda D. Schuessler, Loudon TN
Michael Skulavik, Atkinson, NE
Gloria Vanderhorst, Chevy Chase, MD

A Family Portrait: *Gesneria pedicellaris*

By Paul Kroll

5953 Broadway, No. 128 • Lancaster, NY 14086
Email: pfkroll@me.com

This column originally was conceived by Georgene Albrecht to introduce African violet enthusiasts to the various plants available in the gesneriad family. After all, any of us who serve as AVSA judges need to learn about the "other gesneriads."

Within the gesneriad family there are many genera. The plant I chose to feature in this issue is a particular favorite of mine that I have grown for more than 30 years. I got my original cuttings from Betty Tapping when she came to speak on gesneriads at one of our local plant club meetings and I have been growing this plant ever since.

About Gesneria

The genus *Gesneria i*s one of those within the gesneriad (Gesneriaceae) family. Yes, it can be a bit confusing: the difference between Gesneriaceae, or gesneriad, and *Gesneria*. Study the difference in the word itself for a moment and you will understand it better.

Most all the species and hybrids within the genus *Gesneria* must be grown in high humidity conditions. They all are fibrous rooted. If allowed to dry out between watering, they become "toast" and cannot be revived. *G. pedicellaris* is not one of those! Mine thrives at the edge of a shelf, under two T-8 bulbs and completely open to the room conditions. I use my regular potting soil, which is an altered version of the Fisher's mix that is popular with our Canadian friends. It likes to be kept evenly moist, but easily tolerates some drying out.

G. pedicellaris Blossoms

The small, tubular blossoms are one inch long and a bright orange-red in color with a darker (almost brown) edge around the small opening at the tip. The blossoms come in groups, carried close to the foliage and just peeking out. The foliage is elongated and pointed on both ends: where the foliage comes from the plant and at its tip. The texture of the foliage is quite unique and feels like sandpaper to the touch. This rather rough texture is probably the reason this plant can stand an open growing situation as opposed to the high humidity required by most other plants in its genus.

The stunning blooms of *Gesneria pedicellaris*. Photo by Mel Grice.

A Unique Plant

Gesneria pedicellaris is a most attractive plant all the time. It blooms freely and is in bloom nearly all year. It propagates readily from growth tips that are not too woody or aged. The plant will branch when you pinch the tips. You easily can pinch the young tips for propagation and the main stems will branch nicely.

This plant is easy to groom for show by pulling off the spent, dried blooms and perhaps a few dried, older leaves. Small starter plants can be used in container garden plantings quite effectively, adding texture and variability. Try this plant as one that is quite tolerant, different and attractive.

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

Gesneria pedicellaris

Exhibited by: Paul Kroll

In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306
Email: Jsmith4@bsu.edu

Biology teachers often teach or imply that all cells within an organism are exactly identical to all other cells. This is a very simplistic view, usually close enough to reality to not make much difference. However, anyone who has propagated African violets from leaves knows that the baby plants have a regular tendency to mutate or sport and not be true to the original plant. This is because each baby plant starts from a single epidermal cell near the cut surface of the petiole. Each mutation or sport is proof that the cells were not identical. Otherwise, all the babies produced from leaf cuttings would be identical to each other and to the original plant.

It is probably fortunate for the African violet hobby that mutations occur fairly regularly. Otherwise, all of our plants would just be variations of the wild species plants and we would not have the wide range of flower colors, flower shapes, foliage types, etc., that we enjoy in today's plants. The first question in this column raises a similar question but one that has probably been overlooked by many hybridizers. Are the cells in the flower all identical to each other? Does it make a difference which flower a hybridizer uses in a cross? For a trait such as fantasy pattern, the answer might be "yes."

Q: Do genetics differ from one flower to another? For example, should I cross to a flower that shows a high amount of fantasy markings compared to a flower that is almost solid color? Or will the genetics be the same between the two flowers?

A: Very good questions. We often assume that the genetics are the same throughout the entire plant and which flower we use as the seed parent doesn't make a difference. Although this might be true for many genetic traits, fantasy is an excellent example where this might not be the case.

The fantasy trait is notoriously unstable and can change in expression from flower to flower and plant to plant. Just getting fantasy plants to reproduce true to type through leaf cuttings can be a real challenge, with many babies losing the fantasy characteristic altogether. The reason that fantasy is so unstable is the trait is thought to be the result of a genetic phenomenon called "transposons" or "jumping genes." Transposons are pieces of DNA that literally can move locations on the chromosomes. When they jump in and out of the genes for flower color, the affected cells have different enzymes turned on or off and different flower pigments are produced. The movement of transposons seems to be random and unpredictable.

It is probably fortunate for the African violet hobby that mutations occur fairly regularly.

I would suspect using a flower that is expressing a good deal of fantasy would more likely pass on this trait to offspring than using a flower that is mostly solid color and showing very little fantasy markings. The reason is that a flower with many fantasy markings should have very active transposons that are moving around with many of the cells. Hopefully, the egg cells produced in the ovules also would have this trait and pass it on to the offspring. Flowers with little transposon activity might fail to pass fantasy on to their offspring, resulting in few seedlings with fantasy markings. I can't guarantee things will actually work this way, but it seems like a good risk in choosing which flowers to use in your crosses.

Q: If I wanted to test whether using a highly marked fantasy flower improves the inheritance of fantasy in the offspring compared to flowers

with few fantasy markings, should I use the same pollen parent on both flowers, or should I attempt to self-pollinate?

A: This is a very interesting question and I think the answer depends on your goals. If you are attempting to improve the offspring through a high-quality pollen parent, using the same plant for both crosses removes a variable from the experiment. If fantasy is more inherited from highly marked flowers compared to flowers that are nearly solid in color or weak in fantasy expression, the offspring should show a noticeable difference in fantasy markings and have the improved traits brought in by the pollen parent. Scientists always like to reduce the number of variables in an experiment, so using the same plant as the pollen parent would seem to be a good plan for your hybridizing.

However, if you are strongly interested in seeing whether the genetics are different between the two flowers because of the number of fantasy markings, self-pollinating should emphasize the difference in fantasy in the flowers. Any increase in fantasy inheritance from a strongly marked seed parent also should be true if the same flower is used as the pollen parent. Similarly, a decrease in fantasy in a poorly marked seed parent also should be true if the plant is used as a pollen parent. Self-pollination should bring out any differences in the genetics between the two flowers (strongly marked with fantasy versus weakly marked with fantasy). You might not get any overall improvement in the offspring, as you might by using another plant as strong as the pollen parent, but self-pollinating should greatly increase the odds of detecting any genetic differences between the flowers. If your goal is to try to detect differences between the strongly marked and weakly marked fantasy flowers, try the self-pollination route.

Q: When making a cross for girl foliage, does it matter which plant is used as the pollen parent and which is used as the seed parent?

A: Girl foliage is a dominant genetic trait and can be inherited from either the pollen parent or the seed parent. Most girl foliage parents are heterozygous and have one copy of the trait. When crossed to a non-girl foliage plant you can expect the offspring to be about 50 percent girl foliage and 50 percent non-girl foliage. There are a few homozygous dominant girl-foliage plants that would produce 100 percent girl foliage offspring, but the trait becomes even more unruly when present in two doses, so most hybridizers don't keep these plants.

Q: Is there just one type of girl foliage?

A: This mutation has occurred several times, so there are several types of girl foliage. All of the mutations are inherited as a dominant genetic trait. All have a similar appearance, with a white spot at the base of the leaf where the petiole joins the leaf blade. However, the size of the white spot can vary from mutation to mutation. Nearly all girl foliage mutations have some amount of ruffled leaf margins, although this also can vary from mutation to mutation. All girl foliage mutation plants grow slower and smaller than their non-girl siblings.

You can use this last bit of information to your advantage if your goal is girl foliage offspring. Look among the seedlings for any that are showing wavy or ruffled foliage on their first true leaves. If these seedlings are smaller or seem to be growing slower than others in the cross, there is a high probability they will have girl foliage. With a careful eye, you can select accurately for the girl foliage seedlings and save on growing space while the seedlings are still very young and small.

Girl foliage is a dominant genetic trait and can be inherited from either the pollen parent or the seed parent.

Q: Can girl foliage come in variegated foliage?

A: Yes, it is easy to combine girl foliage with Tommie Lou or crown variegation. The best way is to use a variegated plant as the seed parent and a girl foliage plant as the pollen parent. All of the seedlings should be variegated, because variegation is inherited through the seed parent. About half of the seedlings will have the girl foliage mutation as a dominant trait from the pollen parent. Here again, you can select directly for seedlings with girl foliage by looking for those with wavy or ruffled leaf edges, smaller size and slower growing habit.

New Red Lights — Benefit or Detriment for Show Plants?

By Pat Hancock Middletown, Ohio

For some time now, I have seen the abundant bloom produced on violets grown under the new LED red/purple lights. I mentioned it at one of the Dayton Club meetings and at least one person purchased the lights for trial. After a few months' trial, she reported that the lights not only increased bloom count greatly, but the blooms were larger and brighter in color. This seemed to be a "win-win" situation and something we always had wished for.

We have long known that the warm colors promote bloom while the blue colors promote plant growth. Using a mixture of one warm and one cool light was practiced for many years. On pictures of some of the plants grown under these lights, I saw blooms that covered about three-fourths of the plant, making it very hard, if not impossible, to judge the foliage correctly.

Bloom Effect on Show Plants

I wondered whether this effect was a good thing or bad. Foliage accounts for 50 points of a plant's total score. There also is a very big chance that a plant that blooms too heavily might lose the crown. When everything goes into making bloom, the plant's growth suffers. Also, very heavy bloom can occlude the light to the crown, causing it to die.

Recently I had a call from a show where two plants of the same variety were judged and point scored. Both were in collection classes. The first plant, grown under a red light, had bloom that almost covered the plant. The judges took off only one-half point under symmetry. This gave the plant a total score of 99.5 points. I have never before heard of taking one-half point off for symmetry and cannot understand where a gap worth one-half point would be found. Normally, these gaps are worth, one, two or three points. I don't know how much foliage was even visible due to the heavy amount of bloom.

The second plant had some fantasy on each and every blossom. But it was not as bright in color and there were fewer and smaller blooms.

Plants at this show actually were judged by two different panels because the first panel was found to include a judge who had served in classification the day before and should not have been judging (per page 82 of the judges' manual). The first panel judged the second plant and took off 10 points under color of blossom, probably because the other plant had brighter and larger blooms (the red-light factor). They did this even though the second plant fit exactly the description in First Class. This was all they deducted, making the score 90 points. The second panel gave the plant the entire 10 points for bloom color, but took off one and one-half points under size and type of bloom (again, the red-light factor) and the one-half point under symmetry, giving the second plant a score of 98 points.

Very heavy bloom can occlude the light to the crown, causing it to die.

Blooms and Judging

Since we do not judge competitively, but by the merit system, should judges have been comparing these two plants? How much did the amount of bloom actually have to do with the judging of the show?

There is a very old saying: "A large head of bloom and a good stake can hide a multitude of sins."

At the end of the first judging, there were three plants scoring 99 points each. All three plants received the full

25 points for bloom count. The plant with the most bloom was then, by vote, selected for Best in Show. There are no extra points in "my book" for excessive bloom. Page 90 of the judges' manual states that ties should be avoided by use of one-half or one-fourth points for things like hair on leaves or small spots, etc. Further, the final panel should look them over and find one-fourth or one-half point that could be added or subtracted.

Everyone loves a large head of bloom, but do we have some judges who see only that and ignore the foliage? Foliage accounts for 50 points (25 points for symmetry, 25 for condition). Bloom accounts for 50 points (25 points for quantity, 15 for size and type, and 10 points for color). Great foliage has always been one of my requirements, right along with bloom count per stem.

There are no extra points in "my book" for excessive bloom.

Do we really want plants that are so covered with excessive bloom that the foliage cannot be, and is not, properly judged? I have been told by more than one person using red lights that bloom stems will actually come out of the soil on a leaf pot. I have no idea how many people are now using these lights to promote bloom count, color and size. But it seems to me that this is something we need to think about.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Imp's Billowing Cloak

Exhibited by: Beverley Williams
Hybridized by: J. Jackson
Semiminiature

And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVC of Greater Kansas City, MO — Winners:

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Mel, Jolly Frills, Ness' Mini Sota; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Imp's Fairy Berry; Best Standard: Buckeye Nostalgia; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Inner Orbit; Best Trailer: Rob's Humpty Doo; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lynn Canning**.
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Orchid, Petite Blarney, Persian Prince; Best Design, **Dale Cox**.
•Best Gesneriad: *Petrocosmea* 'Short'nin Bread', **Vickie Avery**.

Lone Star AV Council, TX — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Buckeye Nostalgia, Cajun's Coujon; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, **Wayne Geeslin**.
•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia; Mary Craig, **Richard Nicholas**.
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Pepper, Lakeshore Silver, Mac's Callow Fellow; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Pepper, **Anne Nicholas**.
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Cajun's Lil Joy, Lakeshore Silver; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Penny Smith-Kerker**.
•Best Miniature: Petite Blarney, **Debbie McInnis**.
•Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail, **Dolores Gibbs**.
·Best Species: S. 5h clone *rupicolus*, **Dorcas Brashear**.
•Best Gesneriad: *Aeschynanthus* species 'Thailand', **Bill Price**.
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Glenda Williams**.

Mid-Atlantic AVS, PA — Winners:

•Best Standard Collection: Bob Serbin, Letnie Sumerki, Jersey Snow Flakes; Best in Show/Best Standard: Jersey Snow Flakes, **Donna Brining**.
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Optimara Little Moonstone, Jolly Orchid; Best Trailer: Carolina Jubilation, **Linda Abplanalp**.
•Best Species Collection: S. 5c1 clone Pangani Falls, S. 5b clone *confusa* Mather E, S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus* Mather No. 20; Best Species: S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus* Mather No. 20, Best Miniature: Toy Castle; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Susan Arnao**.
•Best Gesneriad: *Aeschynanthus lobbianus* 'Variegated', **LaDonna Hopson**.
•Best Design, **Barbara Stewart**.
•Design Sweepstakes, **Karyn Cichocki**.

New York State AVS, NY — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lonestar Helen Mahr, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Park Avenue Blue, **Mark Griffith**.
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cupid's Jewel, Rob's Scrumptious, Frosty Bubbles; Best Species Collection: S. 5c1 clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397, S. 5c2 clone *diplotricha* Parker, S. 5g clone *pendulus* var. *kizarae*; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Mesmerizing Pink; Best Species: S. 5c1 clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397, **Stephanie Griffith**.
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Heartbreak Kid, Green Dragon, Mac's Misty Meadow; Best Miniature: Jolly Ace; Best Trailer: Rob's Galiwinku, **Donna Coleman**.
•Best Standard: Optimara Dali, **Margaret Califano**.
•Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'La Soledad Bronze'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paul Kroll**.
•Best Design, **Mel Grice**.
•Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Festenstein**.

Tri State AV Council, NJ — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Jersey Snow Drops, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Standard: Jersey Cloud Chaser; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Robert Kurzynski**.
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Winnergreen, Jersey Little Devil, Jolly Frills; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Species: S. 5c1 clone Pangani Falls, **Tim Ferguson**.
•Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Janet Sierzega**.
•Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Destiny', **Joe Palagonia**.
•Best Design; Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Jan Murasko**.

Portland AVS, OR — Winners:

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Rob's Pewter Bells, Rob's Suicidal Squirrel; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Pewter Bells; Best Standard: PDX Pink Panther; Best Miniature: Mac's

Kismet's Knight; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kristie Moore**.
•Best Trailer: Dresden Doll; Best Gesneriad: *Codonatanthus* 'Golden Tambourine', **Diane Reinmuth**.
•Best Species: S. 5c1 clone Pangani Falls, **Tina Banks**.
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Cindi Nofziger**.

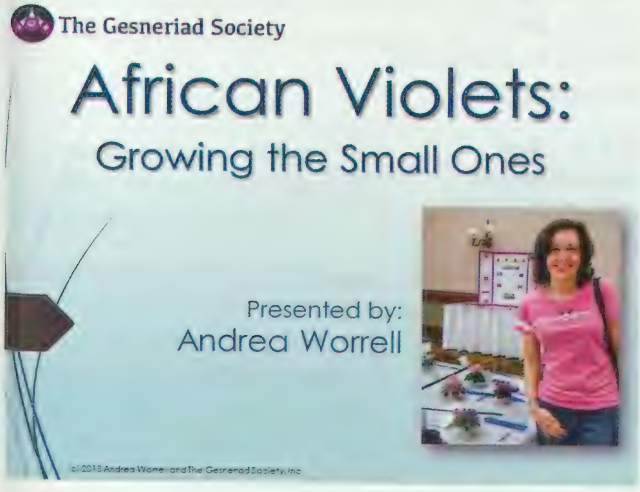
Wisconsin Council of AV CLUBS, WI — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, K's Dancing Spree, Red Mount Fuji; Best Miniature: Jolly Lilac; Best Trailer: Deer Trail; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Chocolate Soldier'; Best Species: S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus*, **Kevin Degner**.
•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Clementine, Halo's Aglitter, Buckeye Seductress; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Lucky Lady Bug, Rob's Scrumptious, Rob's Inner Orbit; Best Standard: Rhapsodie Clementine, **Jerry VandeBerg**.
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Pink Buttercups, Snuggles, Jolly Fire; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Pink Buttercups; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Arlene Garvens**.
•Best Design, **Doug Kindschuh**.

See and Hear Great African Violet Reference Sources!

By Dale Martens Sherrard, Illinois

Email: dalemartens@mchsi.com

Imagine looking at beautiful photos of African violets and other gesneriads and hearing an expert tell you all about what you are viewing! That's a webinar, or online class. AVSA and The Gesneriad Society have made an agreement to make this possible. For the cost of a reference book, you can download the webinar into your computer and view it as many times as you like. Just go to www.AVSA.org, click on Store, and then find the Educational Media folder.



Now you can view "African Violets – Growing the Small Ones" by Andrea Worrell, who created a presentation with instructional photos that shares information to help you grow the smaller African violets. "Growing and Showing African Violets" is by Sandy Skalski, who shares her secrets with you as she grows standard-size winners such as Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler and trailers such as Rob's Gundaroo.

You read his columns in this magazine, but now you can hear Dr. Jeff Smith speak and show photos in "Growing the Saintpaulia Species." Dr. Smith discusses natural, in-the-wild conditions and habitats for several species. He gives you practical tips for growing them in your own home.

If you still are not sure about webinars, try the free webinar, "Meet the Gesneriad Family—A Guide to Easy Growing." It includes culture and propagation of African violets, *Streptocarpus*, *Primulina*, *Sinningia*, *Kohleria* and *Episcia*. When you order the free webinar, I will send you the code so you can download it into your computer.

Funding Solutions Campaign

By Joyce Stork

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The Violet Network

By Jennie Lawrence

Laramie, WY • Phone: (307) 761-1085
Email: missjennae@yahoo.com

Facebook was the focus of this column the first time it appeared in November 2013. At that time, there were not too many pages that emphasized African violets. I recently decided to take another look.

There were a few pages that had been around since 2013, including African Violet Nerds and African Violet Addicts. Of course, AVSA has a page! But in five short years, the number of pages devoted to this plant has grown exponentially.

There are the African Violet Buddies, the African Violet Council of Australia, and the North Star African Violet Council. The expected commercial growers are represented too, including The Violet Barn and Optimara.

Exploring Facebook Pages

I took a longer look at a few pages that I randomly decided to click on. The first was the Lincoln African Violet Society (LAVS), similar to the various clubs that have a Facebook presence. LAVS is an affiliate of the African Violet Society of America and the Missouri Valley African Violet Council. Like other clubs, LAVS had posts about their meetings and speakers. They also advertised not one, but two, sales — one for Valentine's Day, and one for Mother's Day. Photos of plants ready for the Mother's Day sale pictured beautiful blooming plants in foil-wrapped pots with identifying stakes.

African Violets by the Sea is a wonderful page by Grace A. Beacham. There was a gorgeous header picture of an unidentified tree dripping with strands of purple blossoms. I could not find out any location for this page, but I was certainly in awe on this bleak, snowy day from the high plains of Wyoming. This page features numerous photos and several well-done videos. I clicked on the video of Grace's grotto. It was beautiful, featuring ferns and other green plants, along with fountains. This grotto is a place where one could sit and meditate for quite some time. Other videos on this page were more educational. I took a quick glance on one about starting leaves. Again, it was well done and informative.

This is a very friendly, helpful group, with members from as far away as Singapore.

A Small World of Violet Lovers

Then, in one of those "what a small world" events, Ms. Beacham's name popped up again. I am a member a group called African Violet Friends and Hybridizers — Sharing, Learning and Fun. Because I never turned off the notifications for this group, I get an email link whenever someone posts something. Ms. Beacham had posted a photo of Poetry Man, a bloom stalk baby. This is a very friendly, helpful group, with members from as far away as Singapore.

Facebook truly has made it a small world for any and all interests. There are pages from every corner of the world. I chose to explore a page named African Violet Nepal. This page (and many others) had a chat box that popped up. The person looking at the page was invited to choose an option: Is anyone available to chat? I have a question. Can you help me? Typing your own message also was an option. Again, there were numerous beautiful photos on this page. The page features African violets, along with many succulents.

The following quote appears on the header of the African Violet Nepal page. I am sure it sums up the joy of working with plants for many of us.

"My garden of flowers is also my garden of thoughts and dreams. The thoughts grow as freely as the flowers, and the dreams are as beautiful."

As most of us know, it is easy to be sucked into a time void when we are exploring online. Facebook is no exception for exploring thoughts and dreams, and is a good way to spend an hour or two on a lazy day.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Optimara Hiroshige II

Exhibited by: Marie Gagnon
Hybridized by: R. Holtkamp Sr.
Standard

From Garden Clubs to First AVSA Convention: Vicki Ferguson

By Teresa Odle editor@avsa.org

Vicki Ferguson wasn't new to growing when she attended her first AVSA National Convention in Buffalo in 2018. After all, she caught the plant bug early, in her 4-H years, and received a horticulture degree from The Ohio State University. And she has been an active member and leader of garden clubs in her home state of Ohio. About four years ago, Vicki joined the African Violet Society of Dayton and quickly became an exhibitor at her local and state shows. Then she took the next big step.

First Time Attendee

"I am not a stranger to what it takes to plan a convention," says Vicki. Still, her first AVSA National Show left her "gob-smacked," she says. "Surely, I had died and gone to heaven." Vicki was impressed with the vastness of the venue and seeing the huge show in action as she was allowed on the show floor to assemble her designs. She also was bold enough to present at the convention, sharing a presentation with Barb Werness titled "What is Wrong with My Plant?"

Vicki's entry of Cajun's Love's Verse. Photo by Mel Grice

Vicki also was pleased to learn about reward money at the national show. "The African violet community is very generous in supporting the award funds," she says. But what she loved most was the camaraderie. "My hands-down favorite thing about attending a national convention is being around — or more like being surrounded by — like-minded people." She loves how generous people are with sharing grooming tips or to "open up their tool box if you left something at home."

> "I can't underscore enough the value of belonging to a club."

She especially liked that AVSA Convention attendees have the "African violet affliction" equal to or stronger than her own. "We all have seen the glazed-eye look of people who don't get our devotion to and interest in specific genera or species of plants. In contrast, nobody at nationals thinks you are daft!"

Start Local

That camaraderie with like-minded growers started with Vicki's local African violet club, where supportive members offer encouragement and "share valuable growing tips, leaves and even plants along the way," says Vicki. She was not new to growing African violets when she joined, but Vicki knew she had plenty to learn, despite her extensive gardening and horticulture experience. "I usually tell people I have been killing African violets since I was in college," says Vicki. "Once I learned about and began growing with artificial light and watering by wicks, my plants started looking so much better," she says. These tips from her fellow club members gave her the confidence to begin entering her plants and designs in shows. It must have worked; one of Vicki's semiminis (Rob's Combustible Pigeon, for which she won a Best

Variegated Semiminiature African Violet award) appeared on our last issue's cover.

One of her greatest challenges in the design division has been scaling designs down for the relatively small size of African violet blossoms compared to her previous floral arranging. Vicki encourages new growers and exhibitors to attend local and national shows. "The best advice I can give is to volunteer to be a clerk at a show — any show," she says. She believes that clerking helps you learn what judges look for and how you can become a better grower and exhibitor.

Vicki grows mostly miniatures and semiminiatures because of her growing space but being a member of the same club as Buckeye hybridizer Pat Hancock and gesneriad "guru" Mel Grice means she has Buckeye African violets and a few other gesneriads in her collection. "I can't underscore enough the value of belonging to a club," says Vicki.

Vicki (right) with Terri Vicenzi (left) at the Ohio State African Violet Society Show. Photo by Mel Grice.

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

Rob's Boolaroo

Exhibited by: Vicki Ferguson
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature Trailer

Contest Entry —

Classic Violet Spotlight: The 1970s

By Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama

In my last article, I covered hybrids 25 years old or older that were released in the 1960s. Now, I will highlight some classic selections as we break out the 8-track tapes and reminisce through the disco decade. All descriptions are from First Class.

The 1970s represent a prolific decade of violet history with the introduction of hundreds of hybrids. A beautiful 1970 Tinari hybrid, Wisteria (2056), has gorgeous double lavender blossoms over large-growing glossy foliage. Happy Harold (2169), registered by Rienhardt in 1971, has single red-wine flowers and nice variegated leaves. From the same year, Granger's Peach Frost (2216) has double light peach flowers with copper-tipped top petals and grows large.

Some favorites from 1972 were Garnet Elf (2339), with its dark rose-lavender flowers, large frilled white bands and dark, ruffled foliage, and Katy Did (2322) with lavender pansies shaded purple on the top petals and plain, pointed foliage. Lavender Fluff (2450) is a large 1973 Tinari hybrid with double lavender flowers with purple ruffled edges and ovate leaves. Also from 1973, Apollo Pink (2447) has double pink stars with green-white frilled edges and plain foliage.

A good double coral-pink miniature from 1974 is Granger's Mexicali Rose (2574) with plain, quilted foliage. In 1975, a lovely standard from the same hybridizer (Eyerdom), Lavender Tempest (2709), has double lavender-pink flowers with frilled red tips and plain, pointed quilted foliage.

I am presently growing Flamingo (2670), a Max Maas hybrid from 1975, with frilled double dark rose-pink flowers and plain foliage. I suspect it may be sporting, so I am observing it. Moreover, Becky (2669) has semidouble light pink two-tone frilled flowers and quilted, wavy foliage. Years ago, I enjoyed growing The King (2698), with its royal double dark blue-purple flowers, but a rabbit named Lily sneakily chewed it down to a nubbin! I attempted to get it to grow again but it did not recover.

I am presently growing Flamingo, a Max Maas hybrid from 1975.

Little Jim (3005) is a Maas semiminiature registered in 1976. It has double medium pink flowers and plain, pointed leaves. Two other interesting Maas violets from 1976 worth checking out, both with quilted ruffled foliage, are Jason (3004), double raspberry pink; and Mark (3007) with frilled, double dark red frills.

Three cool Fisher hybrids from 1977 with plain, quilted foliage are Barbara Jean (3177), a large-growing violet with good dark pink doubles, and Lochiel (3181), with single Oxford-blue stars. The third is Pamela (3182), which had double medium-blue stars.

For 1978, R. Nadeau registered the classic Black Ace (3541) with semidouble dark burgundy blooms with white edges and plain pointed leaves. Granger's Heart's Desire (3407) has double blue and white frilled flowers over large quilted and ruffled foliage. Furthermore, Irene Fredette released the beautiful Tiger (3433) with semidouble dark blue-violet blooms and large, variegated foliage.

In 1979, Pat Tracey registered semi-miniature trailers Linda Darnel (3621), with double dark violet-blue flowers, and Cirelda (3620), with double pink two-tone blossoms. Lastly, My Fair Lady (3782) by Eyerdom comes from the same year and has ruffled semidouble medium coral-pink blooms and girl foliage.

In closing, please try growing a few classic violets and remember to share some so they won't "stop staying alive" through the 21st century!

Contest Entry —

Classic Violet Spotlight: The 1980s

By Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama

As in previous articles, I will use the term classic to refer to vintage violets because the term reminds me of literary classics. The 1980s were eventful, marked by weird hairstyles, oversized accessories, and neon-color fashions. Technology progressed rapidly with NASA's launch of the space shuttle program and the introduction of the IBM PC, Apple Macintosh and Nintendo Entertainment system. A significant 1980s historical event was the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In the African violet world, two sweet traits were introduced in this decade: thumbprint flowers and raspberry edges. As we travel back to the '80s, put on your Members Only jacket, dust off your Walkman, and pop in an audio cassette while you keep reading to see that African violets from the '80s are totally cool! (All descriptions are from First Class).

My research into 1980s classics revealed Anna Kreeck (5784), which blooms nicely with double bright pink stars over variegated foliage. Granger's Carnival (4298) has lovely semidouble dark red-orchid flowers with some white and ruffled, large foliage. Emilie Savage (5445) pops with double lavender-blue flowers and thin white-green edges and dark green large ruffled leaves. Interlude (4935) is another Granger hybrid, with double silver-blue lavender flowers with white edges, and Kingwood Blue (5448) has double light blue flowers over medium green girl foliage.

Elizabeth (7058), by B. Bryant, has double light pink two-tone stars with raspberry edges and Tommie Lou (TL) variegated leaves. Garnet Halo (7063), by Gordon Boone, is a vivid purple-red with large variegated foliage, and Wrangler's Boot Stompin' (6218) has nice double red flowers with white frilled edges and large variegated leaves. Wrangler's Gambling Fever (6387) has bright fuchsia pansies over dark green and pink TL variegated foliage. Fisher's Leone (4540) is a good pink fantasy on a plum background that grows large, and Fisherman's Paradise (4843) is also large with double dark lavender flowers, purple edges and variegated leaves. Cactus Rose (4147) by Fredette has double bright pink blooms over plain foliage. Sedona (7073), by Kent Stork, has semidouble red wavy stars and plain large dark green foliage.

Aca's Red Delight (4601) has frilled double-red flowers and dark green heart-shaped leaves. Moreover, Apache Campfire (6129) has striking variegated leaves with single pink two-tone flowers with rose centers. Another cool one is Berry Splash (4107), by E. Champion, with double pink and fuchsia blooms on top of crown variegated foliage. Bob's Omega (4153) produces interesting single pink stars with rose stripes and is not a chimera! King's Treasure (7210) has stunning semidouble dark lavender stars with purple bands and white wavy edges. The medium green quilted foliage grows large. Magnolia (6378) has semidouble to double light pink flowers and large, very dark, ovate, glossy foliage.

Magic Blue (6249) is a semimini Pittman hybrid with double dark blue flowers and white edges. Winnergreen (4693) has cool double white, green and lavender frilled flowers over light green semimini leaves. Heritage Frolic (6716) is another semimini, with double dark rose flowers with white-green fringed edges and dark green pointed foliage. Nancy Hayes (5866) is a good Tinari mini trailer with single blue flowers and darker centers. Skagit Victory Trails (5659) has two-tone single blue fantasy flowers and neat semimini variegated girl foliage. Sugar Bear Blues (7183) has semidouble medium blue flowers and medium green semimini foliage. Ness' Viking Maiden (7182) has semidouble white ruffled pansies over medium green wavy, quilted, scalloped standard foliage.

In closing, please make some room to grow a few classic violets and remember to share them with friends. And a special thanks to Terri, whose generosity encouraged me to investigate the classics!

Contest Entry —

A Penny for My Thoughts

By Christopher Paiva Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Email: cjpsychrn@comcast.net

In the Summer of 1969, my vovó (Portuguese for grandmother) and I took the city bus to our favorite store downtown: Woolworth's Five & Dime Store. The experience always seemed so magical. A trip to Woolworth's offered a kaleidoscope of color and a variety of merchandise such as lights, decorations, gifts and toys with endless choices and possibilities. For Vovó, it was "the everything store."

Vovó traveled aisle by aisle until she stopped suddenly and grasped the shopping cart that I was helping to push. "Oh my … isn't this plant beautiful," she gasped. "I dunno … it's okay," I replied with little enthusiasm. Vovó said, "I never had African violets with leaves like this before." The leaves were the usual dark green but were serrated along the edges, something Vovó had never seen in an African violet. I think she was just talking to herself out loud and not directly to me. She seemed to be in a trance as she turned the pot this way and that way, inspecting every leaf and every purple flower. Vovó was the virtuoso of growing African violets. Her parlor was filled with these plants.

A Name for Penny

After a grilled cheese sandwich and a shared banana split at Woolworth's luncheon counter, Vovó and I took the bus home with her cherished purchase in hand. "I can't believe they charged your vovó 49 cents for this plant," she huffed. "I think you should name her, 'Penny,'" I said. "Why?" she asked. "I dunno. I like the name," I replied. But secretly, I had a crush at the time on Angela Cartwright, who played "Penny Robinson" in *Lost in Space*, my favorite show of all time! She laughed so loud that the bus seemed to shake. Still laughing, she blurted, "She cost me enough pennies, so Penny it is!"

After Vovós passing in 1985, Mom acquired most of her plants. Penny stood high on our living room plant stand. Mom loved plants, but she lacked the green thumb my grandmother possessed. Once, my mom sprayed the plant with glass cleaner, thinking it was her water bottle, but Penny survived after multiple washings. Another time, my younger brother shined her leaves with furniture polish. She shed a whole bunch of leaves that time, but the leaves were never so shiny and … oh … that lemon scent! Penny was an acrobat of sorts; she tumbled off the stand a few times when my siblings and I horsed around, or when the dog would run crazily around the stand like a rabid beast. Penny always fared well except for a few broken leaves and a little spilled soil. Mom always added Penny to the Nativity scene at Christmastime for greenery and realism. I knew the plant originated from Africa but in Bethlehem? Greenery, yes, but realism, not so much.

There stood three African violet leaves in a bud vase.

Passing Penny On

In 2014, my dear Mom passed away unexpectedly, but peacefully, in her sleep. As we prepared to disperse Mom's belongings, my sister wanted to acquire Penny to grow in her own home. I shuddered at the thought. By this time, I had purchased my first African violet from the local supermarket and was enjoying my newfound hobby. I had joined both the national and local African violet clubs. Growing the plants brought a sense of relaxation and peace, which I needed after Mom's passing. For several years I went to the local African violet show but always lacked the confidence to show any of my plants.

My sister, on the other hand, has always had a black thumb when it comes to indoor plants. She is a natural herbicide; anything she touches dies in a few days. Plants come to my sister's house to die and have a final resting place, if you will. She kills them by drowning or dehydrates them or hacks them until they look like a sprig ready to dress a dinner plate. She tends to take pictures of her plants when she initially buys them because she knows deep down that the plants' days are numbered. Sure enough...four weeks later the plants are on life support! She tries her best, but still, leaves begin falling off. Within another week, entire chunks of the plant begin to fall off. She has tried repotting some of the pieces that fall off, but it never works, so she leaves them outdoors as their final resting place. She always sends me postmortem photos and her plant history is famous in our family circle.

So, you can see why I was reluctant to let my sister have Penny, but eventually I gave in. "You have to promise me that if the plant looks sick, you need to let me take it for a while to get it healthy again," I begged. "Oh, I forgot, you're the 'plant whisperer,'" she replied sarcastically. "Not really," I said. "But this plant is 40 years old. I don't want to see it die. Plus, it brings back a lot of good memories ... that's all," I said firmly. She replied, "It's going to need the stem chopped off again ... you can help me with that." Through the years, Penny has had its neck decapitated more times than I can count. Penny always has come back stronger than ever, unlike those poor wives of Henry VIII!

Penny's Demise

In 2016, my brother-in-law decided to move his new 72-inch television into the living room. While he and a neighbor were moving the TV, he placed Penny in the windowsill. To darken the room in preparation for the Red Sox game, he pulled the blinds and poor Penny was wedged between the blinds and the window. It was a few days later that I received a 9-1-1 call from my sister. When I arrived at her house, Penny was lying in her pot on the coffee table sprawled like a lifeless octopus, with her brown, mushy petioles and leaves lying like tentacles in every direction. Penny was dead. With much sadness, I brought her outside to the compost pile and laid her to rest. So many happy memories were attached to this plant. I choked up with emotion because Penny represented happier and simpler times. She was a part of the "Familia." "Rest in peace, Penny, and thank you for being a part of our family for so long."

When I returned to my sister's kitchen, she had made a cup of coffee for me. But it wasn't the aroma of coffee I smelled, so I asked, "Did you paint recently?" "Oh, we did," she replied. We made over Katie's [my niece's] room. Do you want to see it?" she asked. I nodded and we entered Katie's room.

I cannot tell you whether the walls were painted black, in cheetah print, or splattered with mud because I was drawn only to the bedside table. There stood three African violet leaves in a bud vase. Excitedly I asked, "Where did you get those leaves ... *are they from Penny*?" She explained that my niece broke the leaves from the plant weeks ago by mistake and didn't want to throw them out because they still were alive. "And I'm glad she didn't ... do you know what this means?" I excitedly explained to her that African violets could be propagated from leaves to produce more plants. "Oh really," she dryly replied. I joked, "I'm the plant whisperer, remember?"

Penny Lives On

Today, we have a few more "Pennies" that have been given away to family members from those rescued leaves. My sister's plant gets a home visit and wellness check from me every so often. In 2019, Penny will reach 50 years old. True, it's not the exact same plant, but I know it's Penny. With her dark mangled green serrated leaves, misshaped symmetry and dark purple flowers, she sits proudly on my light stand among award-winning Buckeye and Cajun varieties. Penny doesn't know the difference. She is as beautiful as the day Vovó took her home on the bus from Woolworth's.

In many ways, Penny is a keepsake in our family, just like how others hold on dearly to a piece of jewelry, a letter or a photograph of a deceased loved one. Keepsakes connect us through space and time. We keep these items to pass along so the joy and legacy will live on long after we're gone. Penny is nothing more than an African violet plant, but like any keepsake, the true meaning lies not in the plant itself, but in the stories and memories attached to her.

Contest Entry —

Dirty Perlite for Growing Violet Species

By Karyn Cichocki • Lafayette, New Jersey • Email: kdc05@ptd.net

Before I explain dirty perlite, I will start by describing the growing conditions for my violets. I have a light stand that is 4 feet wide and has three shelves so I can put four of the long green plastic trays on a shelf. The light fixture originally used two T12 fluorescent bulbs, but as the ballasts burned out I replaced them with T8s and use T8 cool white bulbs. There is a distance of about 14 inches from the top of the trays to the fluorescent bulbs.

This spring, I replaced the T8 bulbs with daylight and cool white T8 LED replacement bulbs. I originally had the lights on for 10 hours a day but have reduced that time to 8 hours. The result has been better bloom and blooms on several of the species that hadn't bloomed for me before.

Watering

I water all my violets using a dual wicking method that Pat Hancock wrote about in a previous issue of *African Violet Magazine*. I cut the plastic grating used for fluorescent lights so they fit inside the green tray. PVC pipe (1-inch inside dimension) sections are placed in the tray to hold up the grating so it is just level with the top of the tray. For my mat, I use synthetic felt that has been cut to fit inside the tray with two tails at either end. I moisten the synthetic felt and place it on top of the grating and then put the tails into the tray so that they draw up the water.

I fill the tray with fertilizer water to about one-half inch under the grating. I water the pots with wicks to start the capillary action of the wick and then place them on the mat. **Note:** You want to use a synthetic fabric for the matting so that it doesn't rot; I use either black or dark green to block light from getting into the tray and stop algae from growing in the tray's water. I have two sets of mats so that I can replace them every couple of months. The used set can be cleaned in the washing machine and then put on a drying rack to dry out.

Fluorescent light grating rests on pieces of PVC (top). The black felt material with tails (center). Tails dropped down and ready for water (bottom).

This system works well, but I noticed that many of the species violets I grow kept having a problem with the bottom leaves rotting away. Since rot can be a sign of overwatering, I thought I would try something with my

growing medium. My usual soil mix consists of one part peat moss, two parts coarse perlite and one part coarse vermiculite. In their natural habitat, some of the species grow on mossy rocks or in rock crevices. This means that their roots are growing in shallow areas with well drained porous soil, so I decided to try what I call "dirty perlite."

A sample of my dirty perlite.

Dirty Perlite

I put about six cups of coarse perlite in a container and then added about three solo cups full of my regular soil mix to the perlite. I use my soil mix because it is handy but you also can use plain peat moss. However, if you do, you will want to decrease the amount you use. The perlite mixture should look mostly white, with just enough peat moss in it to look dirty.

It is always recommended that when you are trying a new growing method that you only use it on a couple of your plants, and better yet, on plants for which you have duplicates. You want to do this in case the new method doesn't work in your conditions so you don't lose or damage your entire collection. But I have experience growing many different types of gesneriad species that grow on rock or in rock crevices, and I felt this growing medium would work in my conditions, so I proceeded and repotted all my species violets using the dirty perlite mix.

Repotting Method

I usually put a layer of perlite in the bottom of the pot, but since the mix was mostly perlite I didn't do this. I took the plant out of the existing pot and gently teased as much of the soil mix as I could from the roots. I removed the bottom leaves and any other damaged leaves. If the plant is growing with multiple crowns, I will remove leaves that might be growing over nearby crowns and possibly blocking light from getting to them.

After all the grooming is done, I then place the plant in the new clean pot that has a wick in it, and then fill the pot with the dirty perlite mix. I gently tap the pot so that the mix gets down around the roots. I then water the plant thoroughly so that water wets the wick well. If you don't get the wick completely wet, it will not draw water up.

Some happy plants growing in my dirty perlite mix.

I have been quite happy with the results of using this new growing medium. The plants are growing quite well and are blooming much better. I'm not getting the leaf die-off that I was getting before so the plants seem happier with the lighter growing medium. I also was happy to see that although the perlite got a little darker, it didn't look bad, and didn't have any algae growing on it. My next project will be to try this mix on a few of my hybrid violets and see if I get good results.

If you are growing violet species and they are doing well, then you might not want to change anything ("if it ain't broke don't fix it"). But it might be fun to give the dirty perlite a try on one or two plants to see if they do even better.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Green Dragon

Exhibited by: Margaret Califano
Hybridized by: J. Brownlie
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Precious Pink

Exhibited by: Alva Kesler
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Suicidal Squirrel

Exhibited by: Sandra Skalski
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Mac's Misty Meadow

Exhibited by: Pierre Laforrest
Hybridized by: G. McDonald
Semiminiature

Contest Entry —

From One Rare Violet...

By Valarie Sippin Palmer, Massachusetts

I got my first African violet 25 years ago, a present to myself for Mother's Day, at a cost of $5. The shop actually was a jewelry store located in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and the violet was the only plant in the store. I simply fell in love with its beauty. It was a double light pink and white flower and the edges of the flower were trimmed in a pale green as if they were painted by hand.

As the original plant grew, I kept transplanting it to larger and larger pots, until after five years it had grown so large I used a 26-inch pot. I always used regular potting soil and kept it in a well-lit window with no direct sunlight. I watered infrequently and rarely fed the plants with Miracle-Gro fertilizer.

Eventually, the plant grew so large it was necessary to divide the plant to keep it healthy. I sought the advice of a local nursery. She said it was a very rare violet and offered to have one of her workers transplant it for me, warning me that sometimes the plants die. I declined her offer and decided to conquer the task myself. I carefully divided the plants by cutting into several pieces, trying to spare the roots and delicate flowers and leaves. I put each piece into separate pots and hoped for the best.

As time passed and each pant became oversized for the pot, I began taking two to three leaves and placing them into flats in regular potting soil. As they began to flower, I would notice changes in not only the color of the flower, but also the leaves. The flower color varied from a very pale pink to medium, to a dark pink. Even the leaf would vary from a smooth to a very curly and ruffled appearance. I now have more than 40 plants in various stages of growth.

> ... after five years it had grown so large I used a 26-inch pot.

Over the years, I have given away hundreds of these beautiful violets to friends and family and have received so much pleasure in sharing these beauties with so many.

Some of Valarie's 40 violets in various stages on her sunny windowsill.

Contest Entry —

Violets Can Cast a Spell for A Lifetime

By Gale Seereiter Buffalo, New York

Like most African violet lovers I've known, my mom and grandmother grew violets on their windowsills. Seeing their violets always made me want to grow a few. I grew a few here and there over the years with limited success.

When I retired, I joined the local African Violet Club and started exchanging leaves and buying plants. Although I don't know precisely when I became addicted to violets, I do know that before I realized it, I had more violets than I could care for. In my enthusiasm, I purchased different soils and fertilizers, various pots, and added some grow lights in my basement. It took me months of growing to figure out what my violets needed in my specific growing conditions. My violets have become more special to me than any other plants I ever have grown. They are captivating with their iridescent, shimmering petals and small beautiful flowers.

Once smitten with violets, most of us end up with a lifelong fascination and love affair. For me, the joy of collecting so many different varieties, sizes and colors never gets old. The camaraderie of like-minded individuals adds to the enjoyment of my hobby.

There is one more factor that might make you smile, but I think is part of the fun and appeal of violets. Every time a violet in my collection blooms, I hold it, admire it and show it to my husband. He smiles and tells me I am addicted. I even submit pictures on Facebook. Violets can cast a spell over you that will last a lifetime.

Need Ideas for Articles? Try These Writing Prompts!

We're adding "themes" to many of the AVM issues. The themes are meant to encourage ideas and contributions. If you want to submit an article, we appreciate submissions on any African violet-related topic. But to help spark your creativity, we have a few themes planned.

Want to contribute but not sure where to start? Consider these prompts for a few upcoming issues:

July/August: Watering. "I balance pH by…" or "Lessons learned from overwatering (or underwatering)" "My favorite way to water is …"

September/October: Conference and meeting follow-up. "I learned something new at the convention:…" or "The best lesson I took away from (exhibiting in or attending) the national show is…" "Why I came home with (fill in the digits) new plants."

We welcome photos to accompany your articles. They must be large files, with enough pixels to look clear and sharp when printed across a column. Contact the editor (editor@avsa.org) if you need more information on photo sizes.

We would love to publish tips on growing and showing from experienced growers that will help growers at all levels. See deadlines for each issue on page 57. And watch online (www.avsa.org/magazine) and in the May issue for information on the 2019 article contest. Thanks for contributing!

Violet Club Records Management

Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Is your violet club overwhelmed with "stuff?" Does the group have papers and memorabilia so scattered among members that no one knows what is located where? Do you wonder what to keep and what you can discard? As AVSA archivist, I've gathered some tips that might help local affiliates.

Records

The bylaws adopted by a group and the minutes of meetings are the primary records of an organization. Usually, the secretary keeps these records and might be asked to refer to them to clarify decisions made at a specified time. For easy access, the minutes usually are arranged in chronological order. Since minutes illustrate the development of an organization, they are of historical importance and helpful if writing a history of the group.

The treasurer's reports are important financial records, usually kept by the treasurer, and again, in chronological order. These, too, can have historical importance because they show the financial health of the organization. For tax purposes, some records such as bank statements, checks and receipts need to be kept for seven years and then can be discarded. There is no need to keep postage receipts and telephone bills from 25 years ago!

Important documents should be photocopied onto archival paper and stored in a location other than that of the originals. This is to help ensure preservation in case of a disaster at one of the locations. If documents exist only on a computer or the Internet, you should back the files up to avoid accidental loss.

Publications

Materials compiled for distribution to all members for their information or education are considered publications. An example is an annual yearbook, which might include the programs planned for the year, and a list of the contact information for all members. For many years, AVSA included a display of affiliate yearbooks at the annual convention. They were judged and ribbons were awarded to the best, although this was discontinued several years ago. Whether you call this information a yearbook or not, it is good to keep these annual listings because they document the activities of the group and identify members over time. If your group has a historian or an archivist, he or she would logically be responsible for these items.

If documents exist only on a computer or the Internet, you should back the files up to avoid accidental loss.

Some violet groups, particularly regional societies and councils, distribute newsletters on a fairly regular schedule. These serve as program announcements or show result reports, and often include articles with helpful tips for growing African violets. They also should be kept by a historian or archivist.

Many clubs publicize their shows and exhibits in the local newspaper and often keep the clippings in scrapbooks. Unfortunately, the paper on which newspapers are printed is notoriously short lived. The lignin in wood pulp, a major ingredient of newsprint, darkens in sunlight in a matter of hours, and the inherent acidity of the paper causes rapid deterioration. The best way to preserve a newspaper clipping is to scan or photocopy the article onto archival paper and discard the original. If you retain the original, it will stain papers adjacent to it as it ages.

Show Memorabilia

Those clubs that stage a show or exhibit each year usually have a show schedule or program that informs the public of the theme, classes of exhibits, and rules. Clubs often keep these documents and might display them on anniversaries or other special events.

Sometimes, clubs mount schedules in a scrapbook. If your club does this, be sure to use a scrapbook with archival pages such as those sold for scrapbooking. The old-fashioned kind of scrapbook has pages that contain acid, which will darken and become brittle with age. Hinge the items so the back pages can be read. Do not use rubber cement because it deteriorates quickly, loses its adhesiveness and permanently stains the mounted items. Also, avoid pressure-sensitive tape, such as Magic Tape, which can cause stains. The safest means of attachment are inert plastic photograph corners. Scrapbooks are very difficult to keep in good condition for long periods of time. Filing items in acid-free folders and an archival box provides greater longevity.

Photographs

Clubs often use photographs to record the club's activities, winning plants and their exhibitors, and designs and their creators. Often, the club members place prints in albums. If so, be sure that the plastic pockets of the album are chemically inert. The plastic should be polypropylene or polyester, not polyvinyl chloride. In a humid environment, polyvinyl chloride breaks down and combines with moisture in the air to form hydrochloric acid, which deteriorates the images.

Be sure to avoid "magnetic" albums. These have pages with thin lines of adhesive covered with a sheet of plastic that is peeled back to insert the photographs. The adhesive can be absorbed by the photograph back and permanently adheres the photograph to the page. The photographs cannot be removed safely, plus the adhesive discolors and ruins the photographs.

Many clubs have old collections of 35-mm color slides. Rather than keeping the slides in the boxes in which they were returned from processing, it is wise to individually label the slides and place them in the pockets of polyester or polypropylene pages specifically designed for slides. This makes it easier to see the slides, prevents having to handle the slides individually to view them, and protects the images from fingerprints.

Photographs, both film-based and digital, also can be kept, but if keeping prints, polypropylene sleeves help provide protection while maintaining visibility. Whether maintaining print or digital photo files, be sure to identify all photographs with names of people shown, date and event. If writing on the back of the photograph, use a soft pencil or an ultra-fine Sharpie at the top or the bottom of the photograph back, not across the middle, where it might bleed through to the face. Avoid using a ball point pen, which can indent and deface the image.

Storage Environment

The environment in which records are stored greatly influences preservation of all of the records mentioned above. If records are kept in an air-conditioned living area, they will last far longer than if they are kept in an attic where the temperature fluctuates greatly or in a basement where the relative humidity can be high. High temperatures cause paper to become brittle, and dampness causes mold and mildew.

Try to aim for a temperature of about 70 degrees F and a relative humidity of about 50 percent. Light can be detrimental, especially to color photographs, which should be stored in a cool, dark and dry location. Remember that anything in intimate contact with a document, publication or photograph can preserve or destroy it. File folders with an alkaline reserve and archival boxes can make a huge difference in improving longevity.

Summary

Clubs should keep some records for legal reasons (such as a contract), and others for financial reasons. You might keep other records just for the enjoyment and education of members. No matter what your club deems important to keep, you should organize the records so that an item can be found if needed. An inventory is useful for that purpose; archivists call such a list a finding aid.

Often, summaries can be compiled to replace bulky papers (such as show entry information) and annual reports might adequately substitute for huge packets of monthly data. Making available and preserving the records of a violet club can be very rewarding to the person who performs those tasks and to all the club members as they learn to appreciate their group's history.

If I can be of further assistance as AVSA archivist, send an email message to me at: j_riemer@comcast.net.

Below are some additional sources of archival storage materials to use in club records management.

Bags Unlimited
7 Canal St.
Rochester, NY 14608-1910
800-767-2247
www.BagsUnlimited.com

Gaylord Brothers
Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
800-448-6160
www.Gaylord.com

Hollinger Metal Edge
9401 Northeast Dr.
Fredericksburg, VA 22408
800-634-0491
www.hollingermetaledge.com

University Products, Inc.
P.O. Box 101
Holyoke, MA 01041-0101
800-628-1912
www.universityproducts.com

Going Digital

By Teresa Odle Email: editor@avsa.org

I want to thank Janet for this comprehensive article on how clubs can best preserve their records and memories. Because so many documents, and especially photos, now are created digitally, I had some questions about how clubs are making the transition to digital recordkeeping. So, I talked with Paula Bal, president of Garden State African Violet Club and treasurer of the Tristate African Violet Council.

Paula quickly became secretary of the Garden State AV Club soon after joining about nine years ago. According to Paula, "I was younger at the time and club members decided I must be computer savvy." (She is!)

Immediately, Paula began recording the club's minutes in Microsoft Word on her computer. "For about four years, I continued to make one hard [paper] copy to read at the meeting," she says.

Once Paula became president, the club began sending the minutes out in an email message. Members could read the minutes before the meeting and suggest any changes or corrections at the meeting. "In my opinion, this is working for our local club because everyone in the club has email," says Paula. Making changes to the Word file is easy and the final copy becomes the permanent record.

As club president, Paula stores her copy of the minutes on her computer and on an external hard drive (a device with larger storage capacity that can connect to a computer to back up files). "I compile the treasurer's report on my computer and print a paper copy, because some people prefer it that way," she says. Paula then stores the reports on her computer and hard drive. Your club could make sure two members have a digital copy in each of their homes.

Paula says all her photos now are digital, and the club loads the photos to the hosting site Photobucket for storage. They also share the photos on Facebook, which acts as an additional backup. Initially loading the photos can be time consuming, especially because of file names, which default to a combination of letters and numbers assigned by your camera or smartphone. "I go in and manually put the plant name, what it won, and the grower in the file name," says Paula.

Renaming makes it much easier to search for photos later or share them with others (like your newsletter editor) with labels intact for plant identification and credit.

Many clubs might be switching to keeping more records digitally mostly because of convenience. But there are additional benefits. Paula points out that digital records are more efficient, especially because of the ability to edit them easily. And using less paper makes you more environmentally conscious. But there is another reason that clubs should consider: cost savings. "It can cost a lot of money to print [and mail] records," says Paula.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Roller Rink

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: C. Thompson
Miniature

Tally Time 2018

By Susan Anderson • 4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, AZ 85042

Email: tallytime@avsa.org

The 2018 Tally Time annual report is a summary of the African violet varieties and species receiving the greatest number of awards in AVSA Standard Shows throughout the past year. This year's report summarizes results of 57 shows across six geographic regions. A total of 367 different African violet varieties (25 species and 342 hybrids) were recorded in Tally Time this year.

Thanks to all participating affiliates for submitting reports. Please remember to save time and postage by entering show results directly online at www.avsa.org/tallytime. To have winners included in the annual summary, please submit the Tally Time report by November 20. Enjoy growing and showing!

Greatest Number of Awards

	Variety, Hybridizer, Registration No.	Total Number of Awards	Number Best In Show	Number Second Best	Number of Collection Awards	Best Standard, Semi, Mini, Trailer or Species
STANDARDS	**Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler** P. Hancock #8745	13	1	2	7	3
	Jersey Snow Flakes R. Kurzynski #9820	12	0	0	11	1
	Buckeye Nostalgia P. Hancock #10484	11	0	2	8	1
	Picasso M. Tremblay #6924	8	1	2	3	2
	Wrangler's Dixie Celebration W. Smith #4490	8	1	1	3	3
	Rhapsodie Clementine Holtkamp #8341	8	0	4	2	2
SEMIMINIATURES	**Rob's Fuddy Duddy** R. Robinson #7886	9	1	3	2	3
	Ness' Crinkle Blue D. Ness #8136	8	0	0	6	2
	Jolly Pepper H. Pittman #10730	7	0	1	4	2
	Mesmerizing Pink P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses	6	2	1	0	3
	Jolly Fire H. Pittman #9715	6	1	0	3	2
MINIATURES	**Jolly Orchid** H. Pittman #9719	12	0	0	7	5
	Precious Red H. Pittman #9724	10	1	1	5	3
	Orchard's Bumble Magnet R. Wilson #8479	8	0	1	3	4
	Rob's Jitterbug R. Robinson #8876	5	0	1	2	2
	Persian Prince S. Sorano #8266	5	0	0	4	1

	Variety, Hybridizer, Registration No.	Total Number of Awards	Number Best In Show	Number Second Best	Number of Collection Awards	Best Standard, Semi, Mini, Trailer or Species
TRAILERS	**Rob's Boolaroo** R. Robinson #8053	7	1	0	1	5
	Rob's Galiwinku R. Robinson #8059	5	1	0	1	3
	Rob's Humpty Doo R. Robinson #8456	5	0	0	1	4
SPECIES	***S* 5c1 clone *ionanthus***	10	1	0	3	6
	S* 5b clone *confusa	6	0	0	1	5
	***S* 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker**	6	0	0	3	3
	***S* 5b clone *confusa* Mather E**	6	0	0	3	3
	***S* 5c1 clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397**	5	0	0	4	1
	S* 5i clone *velutinus	5	0	0	4	1

Geographic Region, State/Province (Number of Shows):

Region I: Arizona (1), California (6), Colorado (1), New Mexico (1), Oregon (1)

Region II: Illinois (1), Minnesota (2), Missouri (3), Nebraska (1), Ohio (3), Wisconsin (2)

Region III: Connecticut (2), Massachusetts (1), New Jersey (3), New York (4), Pennsylvania (2), Virginia (2)

Region IV: Arkansas (1), Louisiana (1), Oklahoma (1), Texas (6)

Region V: Alabama (1), Florida (4), Georgia (1), Tennessee (1)

Region VI: Alberta (1), Nova Scotia (1), Ontario (2), Quebec (1)

Award Winners by Geographic Region

	Variety	Total Number of Awards	Geographic Regions I	II	III	IV	V	VI
STANDARDS	**Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler**	13	-	-	6	6	1	-
	Jersey Snow Flakes	12	3	2	3	2	1	1
	Buckeye Nostalgia	11	-	2	-	5	3	1
	Picasso	8	-	1	-	4	1	2
	Wrangler's Dixie Celebration	8	1	-	3	-	4	-
	Rhapsodie Clementine	8	-	8	-	-	-	-
SEMIMINIATURES	**Rob's Fuddy Duddy**	9	-	4	-	3	2	-
	Ness' Crinkle Blue	8	2	1	3	1	-	1
	Jolly Pepper	7	-	1	2	4	-	-
	Mesmerizing Pink	6	-	-	6	-	-	-
	Jolly Fire	6	1	4	1	-	-	-
MINIATURES	**Jolly Orchid**	12	-	4	2	4	2	-
	Precious Red	10	2	4	1	3	-	-
	Orchard's Bumble Magnet	8	2	1	3	2	-	-
	Rob's Jitterbug	5	3	-	-	1	-	1
	Persian Prince	5	-	4	-	1	-	-
TRAILERS	**Rob's Boolaroo**	7	3	-	3	1	-	-
	Rob's Galiwinku	5	-	1	3	1	-	-
	Rob's Humpty Doo	5	1	3	-	-	1	-
SPECIES	***S* 5c1 clone *ionanthus***	10	1	4	4	-	1	-
	S* 5b clone *confusa	6	-	2	2	2	-	-
	***S* 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker**	6	-	1	3	1	-	1
	***S* 5b clone confusa Mather E**	6	-	-	1	4	-	1
	***S* 5c1 clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397**	5	-	-	4	-	-	1
	S* 5i clone *velutinus	5	-	1	3	-	-	1
Number of Winners		191	19	48	53	45	16	10
Number of Shows Reported		57	10	12	14	9	7	5

Contest Entry —

The Trouble with Timers

By Sandi Mynatt Email: slmynatt@bellsouth.net

Chaos, by any other name, still would be just as maddening. I am turning it into an art form and might have made significant progress on it recently. I will let you be the judge of that.

Twice a year, there is an insane mandate to change our clocks either forward or backward by one hour. This practice is outdated and counterproductive, but it still exists. One fall on the appointed day, I dutifully changed all the 25 devices in my home that were reflecting the wrong times. This included the African violet lights on multiple shelf units, each of which is on this mechanical marvel called "A Timer." Admittedly, it is a handy little gadget that turns on the lights at the appropriate time, and off when it's time for them to sleep. The timer is dependent upon being set correctly, so I had to account for the time change. I personally don't believe the violets give a merry toot about what time their sunrise appears ... they just go blissfully on, making leaves, making blooms and making suckers (of which I am one).

A Geometric Problem

Of course, the timers are in various places around the room; each shelf has a timer hidden cleverly behind the plants in the most inaccessible places possible. Might I mention that the cords to each light on each shelf are neatly zip-tied to the shelf so that they are not noticeable and won't distract from the violets? This also left no more than 6 inches of cord returning to the timer and power strip. Neat looking, but the shelf cannot be moved more than 6 inches in any direction to access the timer. Clever planning? I used to think so.

I studied this geometric problem for most of the morning. Finally, I decided to just wade into it and innovate as I went. Did I mention that I had a broken ankle, which was residing in a huge Frankenstein-genre boot? That was a serious impediment to progress. With great difficulty, I managed to get down on hands and knees so I could reach through the shelf, over the violets, and therefore was just barely able to touch the timer. It took a bit more maneuvering — gymnastic fashion — to actually get a grip on it and remove it from the wall. As I did this, I snapped off several leaves and a bloom stalk, which made me a bit ... cranky.

Nonetheless, I was encouraged by the success of the mission and replaced the timer back into the wall socket with the corrected times safely coded into the mechanism. On I went to the other three timers, which were hidden and difficult to access. Numbers two and three went similarly to number one. But number four was the real booger. I had by now achieved contortions that a yoga master would envy. Feeling a bit proud of myself, even though I still was trying to massage the painful cramp out of my big toe, I sat back to await the grand lighting ceremony due to debut in about 15 minutes.

> I was contorted with part of my anatomy threaded through the shelf of a stand ...

Hope for Peace and Synchronicity

The moment came ... and went. One shelf of lights illuminated 5 minutes late, then the others came on at various times within the next 20 minutes. It reminded me of homeroom on Monday morning when the tardy bell rang. My enthusiasm collapsed. Frustration rushed in to take its place. I concluded that there was nothing to be done but to reset them all. So I got back on my hands and knees, moving from one timer to the next to synchronize

them. I was almost afraid to witness the result. This time, two of the light stands came on within seconds of each other. The other two were tardy and sullen. You know the drill: Back I went to adjust them (not feeling very cheery, I might add).

Unknown to me at the time, one of my cockatoos had removed the lock on his cage and had quietly slipped out like the little Houdini that he impersonates so well. As if that was not enough of a potential problem, he decided he wanted some playmates and quietly unlocked the next cage over to release another feathered ninja. I was contorted with part of my anatomy threaded through the shelf of a stand, hovering millimeters over the trays of violets, scraping my arms raw on the florescent light shades and reaching for the elusive timer when all hell broke loose. The two birds began fighting, accompanied by blood-curdling screams and flapping. I turned to see what was causing the commotion and put a nasty bump on my head when I hit the stand on the way up.

The cockatoos continued their aerial wrestling match directly over my head. Silly me, I reached up to separate them mid-air ... and was bitten soundly for my attempt at a peaceful settlement. More leaves snapped as I clumsily got up to my knees. I heard cursing from somewhere far away ... I wonder who that might have been? And then the doorbell rang. Maniacal laughter filled the room. Unable to get to my feet, I crawled on all fours to the front door and opened it. There stood the FedEx man with a big heavy box in his hand, ready for for me to sign for a package. If only I could describe the look on his face; it was truly priceless. I think he was trying to decide whether to drop the box and run ... or stay to call 911. I did not feel compelled to explain. I just signed and looked at the parcel; in it was the bird food I'd ordered the week before. It crossed my mind to refuse it. ...

I would love to say that I eventually had all four stands synchronized so the lights come on perfectly at the same moment, but that would be a lie. I made peace with the fact that they will come on when they get darn good and ready, and I should just accept that without comment or complaint. I know when I am beaten.

Help From a Friend

A friend visited and happened to be in the bird/violet room at the moment the lights staggered on. He commented that it would be nice if they came on simultaneously. I smiled and agreed. He asked if I would like for him to adjust the timers. With all the self-control in my entire body, and restraining my laughter, I smiled sweetly and said, "Why yes, that would be lovely if you have the time to do it." At that point, I calmly left the room, trying not to burst out in raucous laughter, put a bottle of wine in the freezer to chill and made bets with myself on how long it would take before I heard the first expletive. It's good to have friends, even if they drink your wine and refuse to speak to you all night.

P.S. This fun adventure occurred back in the good old days when I only had four shelf units. I now have nine. I have abandoned any attempt at synchronization as a totally ludicrous endeavor.

African Violet Magazine Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

African Violet Terms

Society Terminology:

African Violet Magazine: Member publication of the African Violet Society of America, published six times a year. Also referred to as AVM.

AVML: A series of volumes listing all registered and many non-registered varieties of African violets.

AVSA: African Violet Society of America, incorporated in 1947, with amateur and commercial grower members from around the world.

AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges: This handbook contains the rules and regulations for African violet shows, judges, judging, plus other valuable information for exhibitors.

Master List: See AVML.

Plants and Plant Care

Acidic (acid) soil: Soil that has a pH of less than 7.0.

Alkaline soil: Soil that has a pH greater than 7.0.

Anther: One or more sacks that contains the pollen.

Artificial Light: Light other than that provided by the sun.

Axil: The angle formed at the juncture of the petiole and the main stem.

Bell: Single blossoms with a bell shape.

Bloom stalk: Peduncle, pedicel, petal, etc.

Calyx: The cup-like base of a blossom. This external part is usually green in contrast to the inner showy portion composed of colored petals.

Capillary action: The movement of water upward, either by a wick or matting in contact with the plant container.

Chlorophyll: The green pigment found in the chloroplasts, necessary in the absorption of light for use in photosynthesis.

Chromosome: Microscopic, rod-like structure composed of individual units (genes) that pass on the plant's characteristics.

Condition: The cultural appearance of a plant, including an exhibit at the time of judging.

Crown: The head of the plant above the soil line. African violets are described as having single or multiple crowns.

Cultivar: The term most commonly refers to an assemblage of plants selected for desirable characteristics that are maintained during propagation. Through common usage, the word "cultivar" and "variety" often are seen as interchangeable.

Disbudding: Removal of the flower buds or bud stems to delay blooming for a later time.

Division: The cutting or gently pulling apart of a plant having two or more crowns.

Double-potting: The placement of a plant, still in its smaller pot, within a larger pot with the space between the two pots filled with soil mix.

Drench: To wet to the point of saturation.

Fertilizer: An enriching material used in soil (or soilless mix) to increase soil productivity. Major elements of fertilizer are nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Secondary elements include sulfur, calcium, and magnesium.

Flared-top pot: A pot designed with an extended lip that serves as an additional support to the foliage.

Floriferousness: The quantity of bloom on a plant.

Foliage: The collective leaves of a plant.

Humidity: The ratio of water vapor held in the air, beneficial to plant growth.

Hybrid: A plant grown from seed as a result of breeding or cross-pollinating.

Hybridization: Using the pollen from one African violet and transferring it to the stigma of another violet to produce a progeny, or offspring, with qualities from both parent plants.

Hybridizer: One who breeds or cross-pollinates plants.

Leach: To pour a quantity of plain water through the soil of a plant to flush away accumulated fertilizer salts and neutralize alkaline buildup.

Leaf cutting: A leaf, plus a portion of the petiole, cut from a plant and used for propagating purposes.

Mutant: see Sport.

Neck: A plant that has lost leaves from the lower portion of the plant, exposing the main stalk above the potting mixture.

Ovary: The flower's reproductive part. in which the seed develops; at the base of the pistil.

Pasteurize: To raise the temperature of the soil or potting mix (or one of the components thereof) to 180 degrees F and maintain that temperature for 30 minutes for the purpose of removing harmful pathogens.

Pathogen: Any agent that causes disease; a virus or a microorganism such as a bacterium or fungus.

Peduncle: The stem, or stalk, that supports a flower cluster. Located near the crown of the plant, the peduncles develop between the leaves.

Pedicel: The stem that supports the individual buds or blossoms in a bloom cluster. Pedicels grow from a peduncle.

Petal: One of each individual segments of a bloom.

Petiole: The stem that attaches the leaf to the main stem.

Photosynthesis: The production of food in plants through a complex chemical reaction involving light, water, and carbon dioxide.

Pistil: The seed-bearing female portion of the flower that consists of ovaries, style, and stigma.

Plantlet: An immature plant; either still on the "mother" leaf or potted individually.

Plant types: African violet plant types include miniature, semiminiature, standard, and large in single crown or trailers.

Pollen: The fertile yellow powder released from the anther.

Progeny: The offspring of any type of cross.

Propagate: To produce, or cause to produce, new plants.

Rooted clump: A term used by commercial growers that refers to a group of plantlets attached to the leaf cutting (mother leaf).

Rosette: A cluster of leaves radiating symmetrically from a central stem.

Seedling: A young plant grown from seed.

Sepal: Individual segments, similar to petals, covering the bloom, part of the calyx.

Slip-potting: Placing a plant into a clean pot of the same size to hide any disfigurement or dirt on the pot.

Species: A subdivision of a genus (Gesneriaceae), i.e., *Streptocarpus* or *Saintpaulia*.

Sphagnum moss: A long-fibered moss in a less decomposed state than that of sphagnum peat moss. It is often used in its natural, unmilled state as a growing medium for plants in hanging baskets.

Sport: Plants that have developed new features not seen in the parent plant. This can occur naturally or be chemically induced.

Stamen: A stalk or filament bearing an anther at its tip to hold the pollen.

Starter plants: Immature plants in small pots (usually 2 1/2") are sometimes referred to as "starter plants" by commercial growers.

Stem: The main stalk or trunk of a plant.

Stigma: A sticky receptive surface to which pollen adheres; part of the pistil.

Style: This elevates the stigma into a favorable position for pollen collection, part of the pistil.

Sucker: The beginning of a new plant that forms near the base of a plant or in the lower axils.

Symmetry: The shape of the plant. In rosette types of African violets, the leaves should radiate from the center of the plant like spokes on a wheel. The degree of perfect duplication and overlapping of the foliage evenly spaced around the main stem of the plant. It includes straight petioles with each layer of leaves progressively larger than the preceding layer.

Systemic: Relating to the entire plant system, not a single part. A systemic chemical is a substance that, when absorbed by plant tissue, causes the tissue to be poisonous to certain pests and diseases. Soil drenching is the usual method of induction.

Tissue culture: Test tube propagation using a culture medium and producing hundreds of plants from a minute piece of plant tissue.

Vermiculite: A sterile, lightweight, brownish, soft-textured, pebbly material. It is manufactured from crushed mica ore expanded to many times its original size through intense heat.

Wetting agent: A solution that is mixed with water to reduce the surface tension that causes water to bead.

Wicking: Any material used to draw water from a reservoir into the soil of a potted plant.

Adapted from Dorothy Kosowsky, 2004.

Ray "Sundown" Pittman

By Anne Nicholas

AVSA is made up of a wonderful variety of members. We are men and women, new and long-time growers, and residents of every state and several countries. Some of us are heavily involved in our society; some are less so. And then there are those few who are legends — known to virtually everyone in AVSA. One such person was Ray Pittman, who sadly passed away just a few days short of his 100th birthday.

Ray, who also was known as "J.R.," "Sundown," or even "Hortense's husband," was a fixture in AVSA for decades. He was an award winner, a commercial member, a local and regional affiliate officer and a regular at conventions. But, of course, there was more. If one word described Ray, it is "exceptional!" In everything he addressed, he tended to each detail and the end product. Whether a new hybrid, a new violet watering system, a huge convention or a family gathering, it was always exceptional. He leaves a legacy that honors, supports and encourages our hobby.

Lessons From Ray

Those who had the good fortune to know Ray have special memories of their time spent with him. One interesting lesson learned from Ray is remembered by AVSA Secretary Mary Corondan. All of us should heed this lesson as we prepare for our 2019 AVSA Convention and Show. Mary recalls Ray's quote, "Remember to have FUN at conventions." Ray certainly understood the business of conventions and how sometimes we get too busy to enjoy our time together. The Best in Show might be forgotten, but the **fun times** with our violet friends remain vivid in our memories.

Memories

Bill Foster remembers Ray always had a smile on his face. Bill said that if he, himself, seemed troubled, Ray could, with a few words and a smile, "raise Bill up," along with all those within hearing distance. Bill also said that when he asked Ray about his nickname, "Sundown," Ray told him that in his younger days, that was about the time he got out of bed.

Ron Davidson remembers a time Ray was presenting the slides accompanying a presentation on new plant introductions. The presenter gave a short introduction and asked Ray to pull up the first slide. The first few slides were all of a Pittman family vacation. Ray apologized and said he had brought the wrong slides. The presenter did not know what to do. Ray laughed and said, "I got you!" and pulled up the correct slides. Everyone had a great laugh and the presentation was wonderful. Another time, Ray, already in his 90s, went to renew his driver's license. When he was given the eye test, he just made up some letters. Ray asked how he had done and was told not very well, to try again. He made up a second set of letters and was told he passed. Ray chuckled and said, "Good!" 'Cause I was going to drive anyway."

Many of our members have seen the recent DVD, "Perfectly Pittman," that honors the many contributions of Ray and Hortense. To make this DVD, Andrea Worrell, who already knew and admired them, came to know the Pittmans even better. She, like Bill Foster, remembers Ray's smile as a big contagious expression that warmed your heart. Andrea said, "You couldn't help but smile and feel good when you were around Ray." Andrea also remembers his sharp wit, kindness, attention to the smallest of details, and, finally, his love for Hortense in every way. She remembers Ray as a "true Southern gentleman" and the Pittmans as "the perfect couple."

Ray "Sundown" Pittman truly was an exceptional human. Whenever a sunset finishes a personal good day that has been filled with warmth, friendships, humor and kindness, maybe that sundown is a signal from Ray saying, "Well Done!"

In Memory

Lydia Ann Walker

Lydia Ann Walker was a member of the African Violet Club of Greater Kansas City for more than 20 years after attending a show and seeing Raspberry Rose, entered by Wilma Wolverton, for the first time. Lydia became a member of the club while attending that show. She went on to win many African violet awards. She also became a judge and shared her knowledge with others who attended meetings and shows.

Lydia enjoyed doing special things for special people. She had a picture of Raspberry Rose, a favorite of both her and Wilma Wolverton, framed for Wilma. Today, the picture hangs in Wilma's living room.

Her professional career included positions as a high school English teacher, reading diagnostician and reading instructor. Lydia maintained a private practice as a reading diagnostician and remedial instructor. Her attention to detail and perfectionism helped Lydia pioneer educating students at many levels of learning disabilities in her professional career; she aided others in their further knowledge of learning. Art, music and reading were Lydia's hobbies, in addition to violets. She also enjoyed travel and learning.

Sadly, Lydia passed away last fall after a long illness. She is survived by her partner of 42 years, Peg McLaughlin, and many friends she referred to as "family of the heart." She will be greatly missed by many friends and family members.

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The AVSA Library Committee gives special thanks to Andrea Worrell and Joe Bruns for the countless hours they volunteered to make this Video possible.

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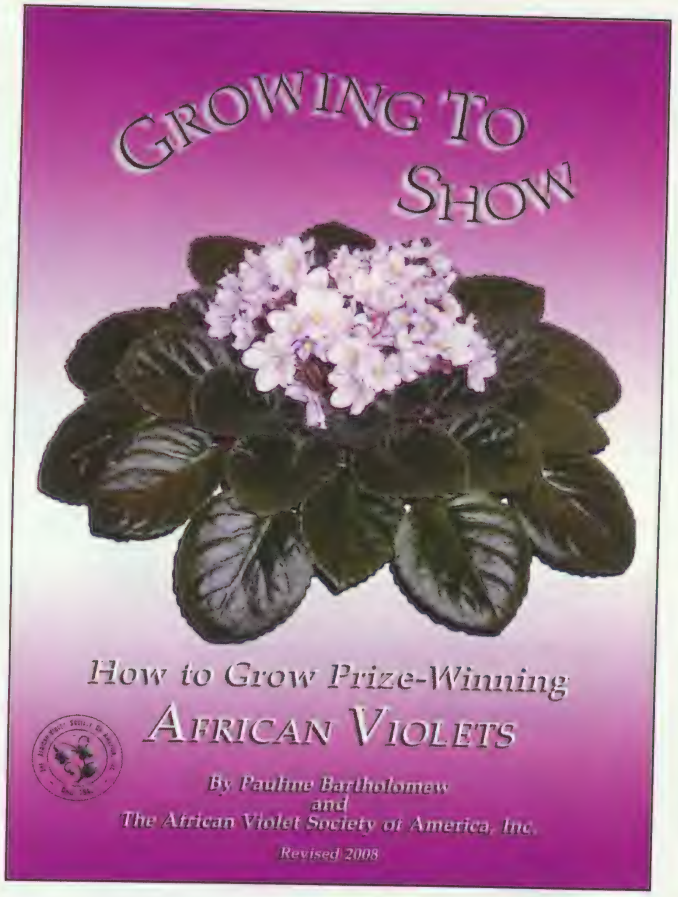

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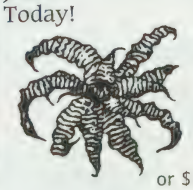

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African Violet MAGAZINE

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Richard Nicholas

3113 Deerfield Dr. • Denton, TX 76208
Email: randanicho@aol.com

Violet Friends:

This will be my last column while serving as your president. It is hard to believe that a two-year term has gone by so quickly. These two years have been amazingly busy, and much has been done. But, as always, there is so much more to do. I am afraid that I will be passing on some unmet goals to a new group of officers. Our Nominating Committee has presented a strong slate of potential new leaders. I thank them and those who were willing to step forward to volunteer.

This has been a truly busy year: a new editor (doing a great job!), a new Marketing Committee, a new Editorial Board, and, if the board approves, a new Fundraising Committee — all stepping up to work for AVSA. New volunteers have stepped up to lead the Technology Committee, the Publications Committee, the Membership Committee and the Advertising Committee. Thanks to each of you.

Donations

Donations to AVSA are increasing, including some large donations that will help secure our future. The Funding Solutions campaign was successful, earning more than $21,000. Dave Burde has donated another $35,000 to the new Barbara Burde Endowment Fund.

That donation and other smaller donations have put this fund into an investment level where AVSA can expect interest earnings to put toward technology needs soon. More information appears on page 13.

Office Move

By now, most members know that AVSA has a new temporary office leased. Four work-team visits provided volunteers to clean, reorganize and pack the office. Moving began March 8. By the time you read this column, our North Street office will be listed for sale and might even be sold! Our new address is 1310 IH-10, Suite 100, Beaumont, TX 77707. While leasing, we can continue to search for a permanent location. I hope all members offer thanks, understanding and help to our wonderful, amazing office manager, Amy, as she works through this transition while keeping so many other tasks running smoothly.

Our new address is 1310 IH-10, Suite 100, Beaumont, TX 77707.

Annual Convention and Show

I would be remiss if I did not mention our upcoming 2019 AVSA Convention and Show. Maybe I should just call it our 2019 family reunion. This is each member's opportunity to see hundreds of beautiful show plants, buy plants, learn from presentations, buy plants, take tours, and most importantly, spend time with hundreds of friends and violet lovers. Did I mention buy plants? Our Houston show leadership team has worked hard to make this convention something to remember. If you are a "regular," it will be good to see you again. If you are attending for the first time, I look forward to meeting you. This just is an experience every AVSA member should have at least once.

AVSA is a family filled with diversity in every sense of the word. As different as we are, we are similar in our dedication to this hobby and these beautiful plants. As the gavel passes again, I hope our new officers will have your support. Remember the commandment: "Thou shalt not whine." Finally, I want to thank our members for your support and for the honor of serving as your president for these two years. I do believe … Violets connect us!

Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

PO Box 1828 • Ruidoso Downs, NM 88346
Email: editor@avsa.org

What a joy it has been to edit this issue, full of content from or about creative growers of African violets. When we asked for articles on designing with African violets, you answered the call! We have practical and helpful articles from AVSA local and national design class winners. Even if you don't enter designs, I think you will enjoy an inside look at the creative process.

The other side of our design issue also is fun, especially for readers who grow more for hobby than for show. We've got a feature about an artist who rendered an African violet in a gorgeous watercolor and a few articles on how African violet hobbyists incorporate the plants into their home's décor. The show designers and hobby growers who contributed to this issue share a few traits: creativity and passion for African violet plants. I think you will enjoy these articles as much as I have.

Growing Basics

African violet growers and AVSA members have a wide range of growing, showing and even hybridizing expertise. But no matter the skill level, we all are learning as we go. We'd like to make sure we continue to offer a balance of content in AVM to match that wide range of skill, meaning we encourage all our expert growers to share their experiences and tips.

We also want to be sure we have plenty of content for new and hobby growers and first-year members of AVSA. To that end, Sandra Skalski will be contributing a column every other issue on growing basics called "My First Violets." To jump-start our beginner-focused content, Sandra has updated the "10 Propers" of African violet care (see page 42). I'm looking forward to her future articles.

> Even if you don't enter designs, I think you will enjoy an inside look at the creative process.

Article Contest

Our brilliant and generous friend, Pat Hancock, has been thinking about some new twists on the successful article contest. In short, we have prizes for each issue, courtesy of Pat and fellow hybridizers, and some pretty nice grand prizes for the top three winners from among those for each issue.

Sometimes, the hardest part about writing is coming up with an idea, so we have writing prompts for each issue to spark your creativity and encourage entries. However, any original article related to growing and showing African violets is welcome and eligible for the contest. Please read more about the article contest on page 12 and get complete details and rules on AVSA's website (www.avsa.org/magazine) or send me an email if you have questions. I hope you will be inspired by our first set of writing prompts and send an article soon.

Contest entries help us generate new and original content for the magazine. But those who contribute regularly for our departments and featured photographs represent the foundation for a quality publication. Thank you to everyone who contributes such excellent articles and photographs to make AVM the best it can be.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Treasured Memories

Exhibited by: Linda Hall

2019 Vacation Guide

By Linda Hall

Summer is nearly here, and these AVSA commercial members (listed by state) would be happy to have you visit them when you are in their area. Please note their contact information, hours and whether visits are by appointment only. Enjoy the education and inspiration that visiting these businesses will afford you!

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Morgan's Pu Yi

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In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306
Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

A question that has come up several times on Facebook groups that focus on the African violet species plants is whether it is possible to reproduce the plants from seed and still have the same "species." I would argue that the biological answer to this question is "no," but I can understand why many would think this way.

Sexual reproduction using flowers, pistils and pollen is designed by nature to mix the DNA in the offspring, not to preserve the DNA of the parent. A special type of cell division process called meiosis occurs to produce the sperm nuclei in the pollen and the egg cells in the pistil. Meiosis reduces the number of chromosomes in African violets from 30 to 15. This is necessary so when the sperm and egg nuclei fuse to produce the zygote, or offspring, the number of chromosomes doesn't double, but remains a constant number of 30 for African violets. Because meiosis separates the members of a pair of chromosomes, any trait that is heterozygous, such as a plant with pansy-shaped flowers that carries the recessive trait for star-shaped flowers, will have sperm or eggs that carry only one chromosome or form of the trait. The offspring will have either pansy-shaped flowers or star-shaped flowers, but not both.

Meiosis also is designed to further mix the DNA by breaking chromosomes apart and putting them back together in new ways. Biologists call this event "crossing over." This means that the chromosome passed to the sperm or egg is not an exact copy of the original parent's chromosomes, but a mixture between the two members of the original chromosome pair. The amount of crossing over varies between the 15 pairs of chromosomes in African violets, but it is a mathematical certainty that the chromosomes in the sperm or egg have been "jumbled" and their DNA is not exactly like that of the original parent.

The differences might not be visible to the naked eye, but they are there.

Even using one plant as both seed and pollen parent doesn't prevent meiosis from mixing up the chromosomes and jumbling their DNA. Yes, the traits from the parent might come together in a similar fashion, but meiosis is deliberately designed to mix the DNA and create new combinations.

Therefore, reproducing a species plant by seed often results in offspring that look very similar to the original parent, but meiosis absolutely guarantees that there will be some sort of differences at the genetic level. The differences might not be visible to the naked eye, but they are there. The only sure way to reproduce a species plant (or any other African violet for that matter) true to type is to use asexual reproduction methods such as leaf cuttings. Asexual reproduction uses mitosis cell division, which is biologically designed to reproduce identical cells. Growers of African violets know that mitosis sometimes sports or mutates and produces new plants, but the process is designed biologically to reproduce two identical cells.

Growers of the species who have produced seed by self-pollinating the plant should acknowledge that the seed is **not** the same thing as the original plant by labeling the seed as *Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *velutinus* times self. A shorthand for this cross is an X inside a circle. This seed should produce

offspring that are very similar in appearance to the original species plant or clone, but not exact, identical copies of that plant.

Q: After pollinating a single-star flower, the petals fell off within 48 hours. Does this mean that the plant is a dropper?

A: It sounds like your pollination was successful. Many plants immediately drop the petals at this point because they are no longer needed to attract pollinators. The mutation for double petals that gives African violet flowers the ability to "stick tight" (sticktite) and not drop is a dominant trait. After pollination, sticktite petals remain on the flower and eventually dry up as the seed pod or fruit matures. If your petals fell off after pollination, I would say that your plant is a "dropper" and lacks the sticktite trait.

Q: Can a white-flowered plant carry the trait for fantasy?

A: White flowers usually are from a genetic recessive trait. There isn't a white pigment in the flowers. Instead, the flowers lack any pigments and reflect all light back to the eye. The reflection of all light makes the flower appear "white."

The genes for pigment production still are present but are unable to be expressed because the mutation for white prevents the production of pigment. Geneticists call this event "epistasis," a case where one gene prevents the expression of other genes. The other genes are present, but do not express. These genes can be passed on to offspring and then can be expressed. So "yes," the trait for fantasy could be in a white flower and not expressed but could be passed on to the next generation. If you suspect a white flower of having fantasy in its genetic makeup, try crossing it with a solid-colored flower. The flower color of the other parent shouldn't matter because fantasy can be expressed as long as there is a gene present for color production.

Q: I've seen some online discussion of mutations where one part of a flower is converted to another, for example, sepals to petals. These mutations were called a HOX gene mutation. What exactly is a HOX gene?

A: HOX is a contraction of homeobox and refers to a class of genes that determine the basic structure and orientation of an organism. You might think of HOX genes as blueprint genes that determine how an organism is put together. HOX genes first were discovered in fruit flies, or *Drosophila,* and have since been found in most multicellular organisms.

In African violet flowers, the floral parts are supposed to be sepals, petals, stamens and pistils. However, there are known mutations in the HOX genes that convert one flower part to another. A common example is the HOX mutation for double flowers, where the stamens have been converted to petals. With other HOX mutations, all the flower parts are converted into sepals, such as with the Optimara NeverFloris, or pistils as in Wesley's Little Monster. A different mutation in the HOX genes leads to the unusual flowers of *Saintpaulia* 'Botanica,' where the stamens and pistils are mixed together. Many different HOX mutations have been discovered over the years. They produce unusual and curious flowers in some cases, but beautiful flowers in the conversion of stamens to extra petals.

Q: Some gesneriads have markings in the throats of the flower. I've heard these called "nectar guides" and have been told that they help pollinators find flower centers. African violets don't appear to have nectar guides. Is there a reason for this?

A: Nectar guides are excellent adaptations if the flowers have a reward for the pollinator hidden in the center of the flower. These flowers often are trumpet- or tube-shaped. The nectar is not visible from a distance, so the nectar guides act as advertisement to help the pollinator locate the reward. The flowers of the African violet species are flat, not trumpet shaped. Their reward for pollinators is pollen, not nectar. They display this reward to pollinators by having bright yellow anthers against a flat blue background. Bees can see yellow and blue colors and the stamens are visible from a considerable distance. Therefore, they do not need nectar guides to attract pollinators

The shape of wild African violet flowers also is an adaptation for bee pollination. The flower petal is larger and elongated to make a landing platform for bees. The two lower side petals help guide the bee up to the stamens to harvest the pollen by buzz pollination. The bee has to buzz or vibrate to release the pollen from the stamens. Flowers have various adaptations to their pollinators; African violets are no exception.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Jolly Jan

Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Natalya Bulko — St. Petersburg, Russia

'Nik-Eliksir Molodosti'
•(11144) 12/27/2018 •N. Bulko
•Semidouble chimera pink large cupped frilled star/two-tone green stripe.
•Medium green, quilted. •Standard.

'Nik-Morskaia Glad''
•(11145) 12/27/2018 •N. Bulko
•Single chimera sticktite lavender ruffled star/blue-fantasied darker stripe.
•Variegated dark green, white and pink, pointed, quilted, hairy, serrated/red back. •Standard.

'Nik-Iasno Solnyshko'
•(11146) 12/27/2018 •N. Bulko
•Single chimera sticktite dark pink ruffled pansy/white stripe.
•Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Dogan Uygun — Karabaglar-Izmir, Turkey

'M. Beyazkasik'
•(11147) 01/02/2019 •D. Uygun
•Single white wavy pansy/pink shading.
•Dark green, spooned, glossy. •Standard.

'M. Elvide'
•(11148) 01/02/2019 •D. Uygun
•Single-semidouble pink and white pansy.
•Light green, plain, quilted. •Semiminiature.

'M. Hünkarbegendi'
•(11149) 01/02/2019 •D. Uygun
•Semidouble light pink pansy/blue fantasy.
•Crown variegated dark green and yellow, ruffled/red back. •Semiminiature.

'M. Nazenin'
•(11150) 01/02/2019 •D. Uygun
•Single light pink pansy/darker eye, blue fantasy.
•Medium-dark green, pointed. •Semiminiature trailer.

'M. Zorbey'
•(11151) 01/02/2019 •D. Uygun)
•Semidouble-double light pink wavy star/light blue fantasy.
•Medium green, quilted. •Semiminiature trailer.

Registration Change

The following has been changed at the request of the hybridizer:

'Jersey Starlight Trail'
•(10671) Add yellow to variegation color.
(Crown variegated medium green, cream, and *yellow*, quilted.)

African Violet Magazine Deadlines

•January/February issue: November 1
•March/April issue: January 1
•May/June issue: March 1
•July/August issue: May 1
•September/October issue: July 1
•November/December issue: September 1

Enter the 2019 to 2020 Article Contest

By Pat Hancock and Teresa Odle Email: editor@avsa.org

It's the time of year to select winners of last year's article contest (and for winners to receive leaves from generous hybridizers), along with the list of best articles by Publications Committee vote. For the new contest year, we've got some changes coming, including writing prompts and new prizes per issue. So, be sure to participate!

The first contest begins with the July/August issue. We've promoted it in AVSA newsletters and on social media. But since we only are announcing it now in the magazine, we're extending the deadline for contest entries for the July/August issue to May 10. Here are the details:

Win a Trailer Crown

Submit a contest article by May 10 for the July/August issue and you could be the winner of a trailer crown (Demers Pixie Belle).

The writing prompts below focus on contest and issue themes, but you do not have to write about these topics to enter! All original feature articles are eligible per our standard contest rules (go to www.avsa.org/magazine for a link to rules or contact the editor). **Be sure to mark your article as a contest entry** and send it to the editor (editor@avsa.org).

July/August Writing Prompts

Here are our ideas for writing prompts to get you started for the July/August issue (entries must be in by May 10). The winner will be announced in the September/October issue.

1. Do you grow and show trailers? What are your favorite trailers, and why do you like them? Do you place your trailers in hanging baskets, on stands or by another display method? Do you have tips for pruning trailers?

All original feature articles are eligible per our standard contest rules.

2. Tips on watering African violets. We always love articles about watering challenges and solutions, but since July and August are all about heat, let's see if we can get a few great articles on watering. Some ideas? Watering basics, novel ideas for watering and humidity, problems and solutions, wicking tips, and any new products such as self-watering containers or pH balancers.

September/October Writing Prompts

You have plenty of time to make the September/October deadline (July 1). The winner will receive a new chimera crown.

1. Chimeras. What is a chimera? What is your favorite chimera? How do you propagate them? What is the history of chimeras? Why do you love growing (and/or showing) them?

2. Annual Convention. If you attended the AVSA National Convention, we would love stories about your experiences. What did you learn by exhibiting in or visiting the show? How did a presentation spark new ideas or knowledge? What was the greatest value to attending the national convention (maybe networking, the sales room, exhibiting and judges' evaluations).

Future Issues

Watch for details on writing prompts and prizes in future issues of AVM, our email newsletters and on social media. And start thinking now about these future topics:

- Growing and showing minis and semi-minis
- Growing vintage African violets
- Hybridizing
- Container garden designs

Top Annual Prizes

Remember, we welcome all quality articles about growing and showing our beloved plants; your entries do not have to match our themes or prompts. We also will select the best of all winners at the end of the year. The top winner will receive a one-year AVSA membership (six issues of AVM) and 10 Buckeye leaves. Second place will receive five Buckeye leaves and a 6-month membership (three issues of AVM); and third prize will receive a 6-month membership (three issues of AVM) and three Buckeye leaves. Watch for more details in future issues.

We also will select the best of all winners at the end of the year.

Judges

Special thanks to our 2019 to 2020 article contest judges:

Sue Hoffman, Virginia, head judge
Lynn Lombard, Washington
Linda Lloyd, Ohio
Barbara Werness, Minnesota
Diane Miller, California
Sharon Gartner, Florida

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Richard Nicholas • Email: randanicho@aol.com

Barbara Burde's untimely passing was a real loss to her family and certainly to AVSA. She always worked hard and gave freely of her time, energy and leadership. AVSA was important to her. In recognition of her importance to AVSA and to honor her memory, David Burde, Barb's husband, has established the Barbara Burde Endowment Fund with total gifts to date of $65,000.

As an endowment, the fund's principal will not be spent; it will be invested. Interest earned from the investments will be used to support AVSA technology needs in the future. This plan is especially appropriate given all Barb's work as chair of our Internet Committee. Additional donations to the fund in Barb's memory will be gladly accepted.

While we will always miss Barb, her memory will live on with us and through this important supportive new fund. Thank you, David!

Convention —

Friends, Fun and Food in Houston

By Anne Nicholas Denton, Texas

Violet growers enjoy the annual opportunity to see old friends and make new friends at our national conventions (think family reunion). Meals and drinks provide a way to "catch up" and strengthen these friendships. Folks always want to know about dining options in or close to the hotel, and what to expect from the weather outside.

First, Houston weather in May is quite nice. The lows are usually in the mid 60s and the high temperatures are in the mid to high 80s. But … May is one of the city's rainy months, so you might pack an umbrella or a light raincoat.

Nearby Dining

The hotel has a restaurant that offers both a breakfast and a lunch buffet. There is a Starbucks inside the hotel close to the front desk. There also is a dinner option in the hotel. For those who wish to venture further, the opportunities are endless.

Remember that Houston is known as the "Culinary Capital of the South." The hotel has a list of nearby restaurants that are sure to please almost any taste. There are many restaurants right next door — with both fast food and full menu/sit-down services. I've listed a few dining choices below just to get you started, but visit www.visitHouston.com to see many other diverse dining choices, the museum district and other sites of interest. The Marriott has a free shuttle that drives guests to places within a 3-mile radius.

Reached by Transportation (and Reservations)

Here are a few other nearby restaurants to consider: All of these are not far from our hotel and require both reservations and a mode of travel (personal vehicle, Uber, taxi, etc). An excellent seafood restaurant is the Goode Company Seafood, 10211 Katy Freeway (www.goodecompany.com). For "Texas" food and atmosphere, the Armadillo Palace, 5015 Kirby Drive,

The Marriott has a free shuttle that drives guests to places within a 3-mile radius.

offers a great menu, live entertainment and even a mechanical bull (www.thearmadillopalace.com). Make reservations early for seating close to the live entertainment. Another possibility for entertainment is the Music Box Theater, 2623 Colquitt (www.themusicboxtheater.com). This small group of entertainers (music and comedy) has been voted the No. 1 entertainment value in Houston. And, there are many restaurants close to the theater.

The exciting 2019 AVSA Convention and Show activities will keep most everyone busy during their time in Houston. But, if you take a break outside the hotel, these and other dining and entertainment spots will help you enjoy the many opportunities for fun in Houston.

Convention —

Luncheon Auction: It's not too Late!

By Edna Rourke • 99 Old Stratford Road • Shelton, CT 06484-6129

Phone: 203-926-9716 • Email: Apapillon@aol.com

The annual Luncheon Auction is almost here. We still need your help to make this auction the best yet. It's not too late to make a donation. Our past success always has been due to the very generous donations of our members, both amateur and commercial.

To our members and affiliates, as well as our hybridizers and commercial members, won't you kindly consider making a donation of a violet-related item or violet-related craft item? Your donations would be most welcome and very much appreciated.

Bring your auction item to me or the Convention Registration table as soon as possible upon arrival in Houston so we have time to set up the auction. If you can't attend the meeting, you can mail your donation to Penny Smith-Kerker, 5808 Westslope Drive, Austin, TX 78731.

Your help and donations ensure the success of the auction. Please either give me a call at 203-926-9716 or email me at **Apapillon@aol.com** to let me know what items you will be donating. I look forward to hearing from you.

See you in Houston!

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

January to February 2019 Total $370

Geneva — $100-$499
Chuck Bingham
Windsor African Violet Society
In memory of John A. Hayes

Multicolor — $50-$99
Pamela Schwager
In memory of her mother, Betty

Two-tone — $25-$49
Charles & Sue Ramser
In memory of Ray Pittman

Two-tone (continued)
Lilianne T. Ager
Susan Riley

Thumbprint — Under $25
Rebecca McMeel
Marion Marti
Jill G. Fischer
Tristate African Violet Council
In lieu of judging expenses for Grace Egan
North Star African Violet Council

Thoughts on Design

By B.J. Ohme Arcadia, Nebraska

For many AVSA members, jumping into design can bring great anxiety and stress! I remember that when I first started entering shows, I would get lots of red ribbons and even white ribbons. It took many shows to get the hang of working with such tiny blossoms and learning all the finer points of conditioning them so they looked fresh for judging. The important thing is to keep trying and practicing — and above all — observing the designers who consistently win the top awards. I will shed some light on how I go about assembling my designs and some tricks I've observed and learned over the years.

Choose (and Limit) Classes

When I receive a design schedule, I read through it and choose the classes that stand out to me right away. Often, a thought or theme will pop into my head the second I read the class title, such as, "Awesome, I can finally use that container I've wanted to use for years but never had the right class to use it in."

I can't stress enough that if you are a new member, please, please limit your selections to just one or two classes your first show out! I've made this mistake in the past and even today it's hard to limit how many classes I enter when we have great schedule writers. My point is this: the time allotted to assemble our designs goes by very quickly.

Preparation and Practice

It's crucial you have everything needed for your designs gathered before you get to the show. If you need to buy or borrow plants or blossoms, be sure you have them secured before you arrive. I always like to do a trial run at home, experimenting with different background colors, blossom colors, containers and line material.

It's also a good practice to take a picture of your finished design on your phone or digital camera and critique it. For reasons I cannot explain, looking at a design in a picture allows me to see things I do not see with the naked eye. For example, you might spot improper scale, a leaf or branch tipped at a strange angle or a plant tipping too far forward.

It's also a good practice to take a picture of your finished design on your phone or digital camera and critique it.

Backdrops

When it comes to using backdrops, I prefer the heavy paper found at craft stores. You can find many different colors, often in the same shade as your blossoms. I stay away from fabric backdrops because I find they accentuate every wrinkle and crease. Plus, fabrics like velvet or silk often reflect the light. You'll want to experiment with several colors before entry day. If you are relying on somebody else for your blossoms or plants, bring more than one backdrop option to the show so you can test which color is the most pleasing.

Line Material and Theme

Another tip I've learned through the years is to try to use line material or greenery found in nature and stick to a theme. Some designers use too many different types of materials in their designs, such as a dried seed head, a branch from a tree and fresh begonia leaves. When you combine so many different components the design appears busy and noncohesive. I always enjoy

using greenery with a hint of the color of the African violet blossoms in the leaves.

It also helps to use foliage that requires no water and remains looking fresh for a few days. Boxwood, euonymus and yew foliage are three types of greens that fit this description. Often, you need a tiny sprig of greenery to fill in a space but getting water to it seems impossible. This is a situation where the plants listed above can come in very handy.

Get Creative

If you find yourself wondering, "how did they do that?" ... just ask. I've seen some very creative inventions for water vials to hold those tiny stems of the African violet blossoms. Ink pen caps, syringe caps and end caps for electrical wiring all work great. I've found the best material for enclosing a root ball is pantyhose. You can find flat washers at the hardware store for a few cents; they work great for securing your underwater designs. Pieces of dry floral foam can act as wedges for balancing a root ball in a plant design, giving it the proper angle in the container.

Above all, just have fun with it.

Above all, just have fun with it. Don't get too discouraged if you don't get the hang of designing right away. Once you get in a groove, it can be very relaxing and challenging to come up with a new idea or technique never seen before. When you think about it, designing with African violets is not easy if you are used to working with roses, gladioli, dahlias and various other flowers used by florists.

Give yourself time to learn and observe as you go, and ask questions if you don't agree with or understand the judges' decisions. Jump in and give it a try if you haven't already. You might find you have a real flair for creating the next Best Design in Show exhibit!

The 2019 Best Varieties List Voting Is Now Open

By Trudy Brekel Email: violetlady7@msn.com

It's time to vote for your favorite violets! The AVSA Best Varieties for 2019 won't be complete without you. All nominations submitted by July 31, 2019, will be included in the report. The Best Varieties report will be published in the November/December issue of the *African Violet Magazine*.

To vote online at www.avsa.org, log in as a member and choose "Member Content" from the list on the left side of the screen. Select "Best Varieties Submission" and choose "Best Varieties Online Submission." Enter up to five (5) different varieties, along with your name, and click on the "submit" button. You also have the option of printing the form, filling it out and mailing it in.

You can mail votes to Trudy Brekel, 14442 Garfield St., Brighton, CO 80602. If you want to email a list or attachment, send it to violetlady7@msn.com.

Do your part and vote for five!

Advice from an Amateur Designer

By Linda Sumski St. Louis, Missouri

Email: linda.mslavc@gmail.com

I am not a master designer by any means, but I do have fun trying! When it comes to entering designs at show, creativity (which comes naturally to some people) definitely does not come naturally to me. So, I understand why some people are reluctant to try designs.

Participate

To those club members who are reluctant, there are good reasons for you to give designs a try. I feel the biggest reason is that designs allow you to participate in your show when you do not have any entries for the horticultural division. (This will help improve your club's score for the Standard Show Award.) Plants used for designs are not required to be in your possession for three months. Also, the violets you use in designs do not have to be perfect show plants. Violets or blossoms can come from a grocery store or that unnamed variety in your collection. If your club has sale plants, usually you can buy what you need that very day!

Don't Get Upset — Learn from Your Mistakes

As an amateur designer, I have mostly learned from my mistakes and by not getting upset when others explained to me what I had done wrong. Even when you make a major "faux pas" at the AVSA Convention (like I did in Orlando) and have your design disqualified, it is nothing to get upset about. It becomes a lesson learned. For example, I entered "Miami's Parrot Jungle," a suspended arrangement, and failed to properly suspend my design. I will know better next time!

Like me, if designing does not come naturally to you, then you will make mistakes. Please do not let that discourage you from trying! Not everyone has that special talent to create designs perfectly, right from the very start. We learn by trying.

Do not get caught up in trying to pull off that one idea you have stuck inside your head.

Afterwards, Ask for Critique

When I first tried designing, I knew nothing about elements of design (in fact, I am still working on it!) In one show, I did not utilize my space. One of the judges critiqued it later, telling me I might have won Best in Class if I had only raised my design up enough to fill the niche. Again, lesson learned!

If you ever wonder what you could have done differently to improve your design, always ask a few experts afterward. Ask them to be brutally honest about it; and please do not get upset with what they tell you. You need to know what you did wrong, as well as what you did right, with your design. Ask for the bad as well as the good, and seek opinions from more than one expert. Often, you will discover you only needed to make a slight change, like moving (or removing) one or two items. What a difference that slight change will make!

Keep It Simple

Do not get caught up in trying to pull off that one idea you have stuck inside your head. When you find yourself struggling to create that certain image, but nothing works, switch to something different. As an amateur designer, it can be most discouraging to continue designing when you try to pull off something that just will not work as you imagined it.

Sometimes I do not know when to stop working on my design. I find the longer I work on a design, the more I overdo it (actually, this happens to quite a few of us.) But I soon realized that some of my best designs were not ones at which I worked long and hard; they were designs I remade at the last minute because my original idea would not come together as I would have liked.

Don't Be Stubborn

Many times, I have entered a design wanting to use that one particular item I came across, not realizing that one item is what ruined my design. Because I am stubborn, I used it anyway, even though my gut feelings told me otherwise. When judging was complete, I asked for my critique. More than once, that item I insisted on using has worked against me.

Remember, the purpose of your design is to show off your violet or violet blossoms, not the item you stubbornly want to use.

"Snake River," winner of Second-Best Design in Show, Missouri Valley African Violet Council 2017 Show. Design and photo by Linda Sumski.

Love the Challenge

Do not be afraid of a challenge! I enjoy doing designs I never tried before, like those at the Buffalo convention. "Chain Stitch" was a duo design staged on a freestanding pedestal with each side different from the other. "Water Borders," the closed inverted bubble bowl, also was fun to try! You can search online for flower aquariums.

I can hardly wait for my next design opportunity! Next time, I might try one of those "mirror image" designs.

One side of the duo design "Chain Stitch" entered in AVSA 2018 Convention. Design and photo by Linda Sumski.

Enter a Design

Don't be discouraged by the number of club members who enter a lot of design classes. Often, they are doing so only to help fill design classes for public viewing.

Over time, sample each design section. Perhaps one of the three sections might appeal to you more than the other two. Find out if you prefer working on large designs or small ones. Perhaps underwater designs are more to your taste. Or, you might prefer a container garden so you can continue to enjoy it at home long after show.

Are you up to the challenge? Having fun with designs really is quite easy.

At your next show, please give designing a try!

Coming Events

May 3-5 — Pennsylvania
African Violet Society of
Springfield, Delaware County
Annual Show and Sale
Springfield Mall, Lower Level, Center Court
1250 Baltimore Pike
Springfield, PA
Friday: 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Saturday: noon-8:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Alice Dulaney: adulaney@verizon.net
Linda M. Kilby: DrLinda97@gmail.com

May 3-4 — Wyoming
Sheridan African Violet Club
Show and Sale
St. Peter's Episcopal Church
1 S. Tschirgi St., Sheridan WY
Friday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Debra Hanson: 307-752-3188
debhanson1957@gmail.com

May 4 — New Jersey
Garden State African Violet Club
67th Annual African Violet Show & Plant Sale
MCCC Horticulture Program at
Mercer County Community College
Student Center
1200 Old Trenton Rd.
West Windsor, NJ
Noon-4 p.m.
gsavcmail@gmail.com
Facebook: Garden State African Violet Club

May 4-5 — New York
African Violet & Gesneriad Society of
Western New York
Show and Sale
Walden Galleria Mall
1 Walden Galleria
Buffalo, NY
Saturday: noon–5 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Judy O'Neil: 716-662-9434
Judyoneil1945@gmail.com

May 4-5 — New York
Saintpaulia Society of Long Island
Show and Plant Sale
Planting Fields Arboretum
1395 Planting Fields Road
Convention Center
Upper Brookville, NY
Saturday: 1-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Carolyn Klein: carolynklein@me.com

May 4-5 — Wisconsin
Oshkosh Violet Society
African Violet Show & Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall
531 Knapp St.
Oshkosh, WI
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Sunday: 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kevin Degner: 920-426-3764
kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net

May 10 — Montana
Billings Bloomers African Violet Club
Annual African Violet Sale
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
180 24th St. West
Billings, MT
10 a.m.-4 p.m
406-850-9776; 656-2694; or 652-1388
sassysmom@hotmail.com

May 11 — New Jersey
African Violet Club of Burlington County
Annual Show and Sale
Medford Leas Retirement Community
1 Medford Leas Way
Medford, NJ
Noon-5 p.m.
Susan Arnao: searnao@aol.com

May 11 — Wisconsin
Crosstown AVC
Annual Spring Sale
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Jerry VandeBerg: 608-274-2734
jerrygema@att.net

May 26-June 2 — National Convention
African Violet Society of America
Convention and Public Sale
Houston Marriott Westchase
2900 Briarpark Dr.
Houston, TX 77042
Public Salesroom Hours
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African Violet Council
Show and Sale
Missouri Botanical Garden, Orthwein Hall
4344 Shaw Blvd.
St. Louis, MO
9 a.m.-5 p.m. (both days)
Martha: 314-406-4628
Linda: linda.mslavc@gmail.com

Senior Judges: Important Notice

By Barbara Werness • bwerness@comcast.net • 763-754-3918

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2019. Here's how:

Send the request to **Barbara Werness, 12354 Naples Street NE, Blaine, MN 55449.**
•Include a check for $5 payable to AVSA and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, 2016 edition, page 83.
•Cash, personal check or cashier's checks are acceptable. Note: Sorry, but Canadian postal money orders no longer can be accepted.

You may receive the examination by email as a Microsoft Word document. If not received, follow up within two weeks. If you require a hard copy by postal mail, allow up to three weeks for delivery. Please specify email or hard copy.

A **printed hard copy** (*not* electronic copy via email) of the exam must be returned to Barbara Werness by October 1, 2019, for grading.

Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination can send a request and $5 check payable to AVSA to Barbara Werness.

Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per the AVSA Handbook:
1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedule of five AVSA shows judged (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient.)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned per the AVSA Handbook, 2016 Edition, Page 83.

Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2019, will be returned and application may be made next year.

No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2019. Please include email address and you will be notified of receipt of your exam or include a self-addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

Fran Gorecki Captures African Violets in Watercolor

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Fran Gorecki has been interested in art since she was young. She also enjoys African violets. When Veng Chiu Ho of Macau shared a striking photo of a bicolor violet online, Fran was inspired.

Photo by Veng Chiu Ho on which Fran based her watercolor.

Fran and her husband moved to Florida from Chicago about 25 years ago. "I have been interested in drawing and painting since I was young but have not had any formal training. I was pretty much self-taught until recently," she says. Many years ago, she tried oil painting, then acrylics. "Then I tried watercolor and fell in love," says Fran.

"It is an extremely challenging medium, but I was hooked. I stopped painting for several years because my job and life just got in the way. We moved to a 55-and-over community three and a half years ago. I noticed that there was a watercolor class at our clubhouse. I finally started going to the class in fall 2017. I've been enjoying it ever since."

Fran has owned violets for about 10 years. "Where I live now doesn't have great light and I only have five plants. I don't have much of a green thumb, so I think I have better luck painting them than growing them," she says.

Fran is a member of the Facebook African Violet Buddies group, which was where she saw Veng Chiu Ho's post of the unidentified red and white violet. "I thought that it was a really great photo and a beautiful plant. I also thought the flowers were an unusual color. Something just told me that the photo would make a good painting, so I wrote and got permission to paint it."

Fran's watercolor based on the Facebook post. Painting and photo by Fran Gorecki.

This was the first painting Fran had done of an African violet. "I paint primarily as a hobby but have sold some paintings. I enjoy doing paintings of friends' and relatives' pets and giving them as gifts. I haven't found my specialty yet but enjoy painting birds, flowers, pets and landscapes."

When asked what challenges she had painting from this photo, Fran replied, "The challenge in doing this painting was in trying to retain the softness where the petals change color and to capture all of the colors in the leaves. I think it took about six hours to complete the painting."

Fran's watercolor painting, seen here, also was posted on Facebook. In February 2019, it was displayed at the Brevard Watercolor Society in Melbourne, Florida, and now is hanging in Fran's home. She was excited to be asked to share it with readers of *African Violet Magazine*.

News from the Technology Front: The Status of First Class for Mobile App

By David Kesler • Email: djkesler@mac.com

Users have been encountering problems with the updating of plant data on the iOS platform (iPhone and iPad), as well as some distribution issues related to Apple App Store policies. AVSA, acting on the advice of the Technology Committee, has decided that the First Class for Mobile (FC4M) app will be phased out. This announcement does not affect First Class for Android.

What Does This Mean?

First, the app should be back in the Apple App Store by the time you read this. Second, the support and updates for the app will continue for a year. Third, anyone with this app can receive the FCViewer (FCV) app for no charge.

The two apps are not exactly aimed at the same spot. Both deliver pictures and text descriptions found in the AVML. Each of them has unique extra features. The biggest difference is that FC4M stores the plant data and pictures locally on your mobile device's memory, while FCV uses the internet to access this information. This means that FCV uses much less memory but **requires** either a cellular or Wi-Fi connection to the internet to function. The data updates that happen every 2 months are done once for everyone on a cloud database; you need take no action. The advantage for FC4M is that you can view the plant information even when no internet connection is available. The offsetting disadvantage is that the user must manually update the database and there have been problems with the updating process.

How to Change Out FC4M

We will not be able to change out all the FC4M apps at the same time. Apple allows us to offer up to 100 gift codes each quarter for an app. We will be giving those codes out on a first-come, first-served basis each quarter until they're gone for that quarter. If you want to take advantage of the offer, call the office and speak with Amy. The subscription for data updates for FCV uses the same password system as First Class v2 and First Class for All. If you do not have a desktop program, you will need to purchase a Data Subscription, $11 for a year's updates.

Designing on a Dime

By Linda Hall Ravenwood, Missouri

Email: linda.hall6641@hotmail.com

Do you create designs for local, council, state or national shows? If you do, you know that it can be a very expensive proposition. I've been designing for more than 30 years and I have spent thousands of dollars creating those designs. I always have to buy something new for whatever design I am putting together. You know what I mean … the line material isn't tall enough, or broad enough or skinny enough; the background is the wrong shade of the color you have chosen or its texture isn't right. Maybe the container isn't the right size, color or shape. And you know that any of those items could mean the difference between a blue or red ribbon, or a best in class vs. best in show!

Through the years, I have become wiser (must be my age) and have learned some "tricks" I'd like to share to save you money, time and grief when designing.

Container Gardens

Let's tackle container gardens first. If you like them, start scoping out places in your yard, or family members' and friends' yards, for moss. Depending on where you live, you can find it in the strangest places, like behind a garage, between storage sheds, under a shady tree, along shaded creek beds or even under solar panels. (My husband was just trying to save money on electricity, but I got a surprise bonus; moss is everywhere!)

Underwater flower arrangement with grape stems.

Next, start growing miniature African violets or miniature trailers. Most violet growers will share a leaf or two or a sucker or extra crown from a trailer and that's **free** material. (Don't forget to share back!) If you purchase miniature terrarium plants, keep them growing over the year and take cuttings to multiply the plants to use next year or to share with someone else so they don't have to buy them. It takes a while and a little work to get to the free stage in this category of design, but when you are retired and live on a budget, there is plenty of incentive!

Plant and Flower Arrangements

I am going to lump plant and flower arrangements in one category because they use a lot of the same elements. First, let's talk backdrops, which we know put a finishing touch on your design. Paper or fabric: that is the question. Paper is less expensive, requires no ironing, and doesn't take up much storage space. On small designs, scrapbooking paper is cheap and comes in many colors, designs and textures. Just cut it to size (be sure to measure twice and cut once!) and attach it to a niche with removable adhesive (such as Stick-Um.) Done! How easy was that?

Do you go to auctions, flea markets or garage sales? Those are absolutely the best places to find wonderful containers (including dishes for dish gardens). The most difficult to find are clear containers for underwater designs, but if you watch sales at your local Hobby Lobby, Michael's or any craft store you frequent, you probably can find a bargain or two. My suggestion: Before your birthday, Valentine's Day, Mother's or

Father's Day, anniversary or Christmas, drop a hint for a gift card to your favorite hobby store. That will save you money and your loved ones will appreciate the suggestion.

Dried and painted corn husks.

Line Material

Now, here is the fun part — line material. The freebies are endless! Here is a list of materials to use fresh, dried or painted; they are readily available if you just go looking, or more like hunting:

- Corn husks – dried (my favorite)
- Snake grass (*Equisetum laevigatum*) – dried or fresh, found in wet ditches
- Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*) blossoms – dried
- Coneflower (*Echinacea*) – dried
- Hosta spikes – dried
- Grapevines – love the curly ones!
- Grape stems – straight from the grocery store: eat the grapes, dry the stems and paint
- Orchid blooms – dried miniature ones
- Milkweed pods – dried
- Crimson barberry bush – fresh, great for underwater
- Decorative yard grasses
- Honeysuckle vine
- Clematis vine – dried
- Locust tree pods

These are some of my favorites, and the list is endless if you are willing to collect and dry the materials (if you have a dehydrator, it is a great way to speed up the drying time.) These line materials often are common "throw-away" items. Look around your yard, and those of your neighbors and family members. Or you might find these "gems" in ditches, fields or forests. Every part of the country has specialty shrubs, grasses and "weeds" that might be just the shape or height you are looking for. Just collect what you like, and the best part is that most of them are **free!**

Editor's Note: All designs and photos in this article are by Linda Hall.

Fresh snake grass in a design.

Curly dried grape vines.

Dried snake grass and coneflowers.

A Family Portrait: *Primulina leprosa*

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, Ohio
Email: melsgrice@earthlink.net

The primulina species plant *Primulina leprosa* recently was discovered in southeastern China by Dr. Wen Fang of the Guangxi Institute of Botany in Guilin, China. It was found growing in shaded conditions, shallowly rooted on limestone rocks around the base of the limestone hills characteristic of southeastern China. This species is known only to be found in a few sites, so it is considered endangered.

Blooms and Foliage

The yellow, red-striped blossoms emerge from clamshell-like bracts that open sequentially over an extended period. These blossoms contrast beautifully with the dark maroon, thick bullate foliage. According to the dictionary, "bullate" describes something covered with rounded swellings like blisters, which aptly applies to the leaves of this plant. The attractive foliage is even more succulent than an African violet and breaks off easily, so don't try to reposition it like you would an African violet leaf. Frequent turning of the plant so that it receives light from different directions is the only way to ensure that the plant grows symmetrically and does not lean toward one direction.

Mimicking Natural Conditions

I always try to learn where and how a plant grows in nature so that I can try to duplicate the growing conditions that make it happy. As noted above, *P. leprosa* grows naturally in cracks in limestone rocks with very little soil. It has a very shallow root system that requires good aeration with consistent moisture. I add extra coarse perlite to the bottom of shallow pan pots so that the roots are not sitting in water. I also have been adding some limestone chips to the bottom of the pots, since in China these plants are found growing on limestone rocks.

I can't wait until someone uses this species in hybridizing to create some interesting hybrids.

My soil mix includes Pro-Mix HP, Light Warrior by Fox Farm, coarse perlite, charcoal and some dried molasses. Primulinas require less fertilizer than African violets so I use even less fertilizer than I would for an African violet. I grow my *P. leprosa* under two T-8 fluorescent tubes on the bottom shelf of my plant stands, where it is cooler.

The *P. leprosa* in the photo was grown by Bill Price and shown at the Toronto Gesneriad Society show in 2018. I also want to thank Bill for distributing this newly found primulina species to interested growers like me. I can't wait until someone uses this species in hybridizing to create some interesting hybrids.

I am sure that you will see some outstanding specimen plants of new Chinese primulinas at the 2019 Gesneriad Society Convention show in Cincinnati this coming July.

P. leprosa is definitely one gesneriad that everyone should have in their collection.

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

Primulina leprosa

Exhibited by: Bill Price

Scale in Design

By Pat Hancock Middletown, Ohio

What is scale and how is it related to design? Scale is one of the most important elements in the making or judging of a design. Page 70 in the AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges states that as an interpretive flower or plant design decreases in size, the scale becomes much harder to achieve. As many as 20 of the 40 points allowed for "design" can be deducted for the lack of scale. This principle also applies to container gardens. Everything in the planting should be in scale.

Dish garden design by Caroline Klein. Photo by Mel Grice.

Where Is Scale Covered?

In interpretive flower and plant arrangements, scale comes into play in the relationship of materials (worth 10 points) and in design (worth 40 points). In container gardens, it is covered in the landscape plan (worth 40 points).

The landscape plan is the plan used to create a familiar landscape in miniature. The size of the trees and plants should be in reasonable proportion to one another. This is the true meaning of scale.

> Every individual plant should be in the proper scale to every other plant.

Judging Proportion

When judging container gardens, you should always be aware whether each plant in the garden is in the right proportion to the other plants included. Think, for instance, how large an African violet plant would look if you placed it beside a large oak tree. When you think about it this way, you realize that the violet in a container garden should be as small as possible: perhaps a very small miniature, a micro-miniature, or a rooted crown from a trailer. It can be hidden behind a tree or in the back of the planting, barely visible. The African violet should never be the focal point in a container garden.

Design classes and container garden classes are separate parts of the show and should not be thought of in the same way. They have two different point scales and should not be judged as though they are the same.

The most important part of the landscape plan is that every plant or tree should be in proportion to every other plant or tree — just as they are found in nature. Judges always should deduct points if the African violet is too large or the focal point of the design. There is no focal point in a container garden. Every individual plant should be in the proper scale to every other plant. This is the purpose of the landscape plan. Proper scale is very much a feature of design that we should be rewarding.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Special Friends

Exhibited by: Barb Lafashia

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Across Borders

Exhibited by: Vicki Ferguson

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Attachment

Exhibited by: Mel Grice

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Vital Link

Exhibited by: Linda Sumski

And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

Tampa AVS, FL — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Freckleface Kid, Cajun's Storm Watch, Rhapsodie Clementine, **Glenn Shelton.**
•2nd Best AVSA Collection: Panda Paws, K's Lilac Infusion, Peppermint Marshmallow; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Butterfly, Jolly Fun, Mac's Misty Meadow; Best in Show/Best Standard: Panda Paws; Best Trailer: Fun Trail; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carolee Carter.**
•Best Semiminiature: Lil Glimpse of Spring; Best Species: S. *ionantha* subsp. *pendula*, **Angela Newell.**
•Best Miniature: Rob's Fe Fi; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Miriam,' **Jim Boyer.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Lou Harden.**

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

By Susan Hapner St. Louis, Missouri

January 1, 2019 to February 28, 2019 Total $545

Geneva — $100-$499
Kathy Bell

Multicolor — $50-$99
Ken Froboese/Hill Country African Violets
In memory of Ray Pittman
Sharon Y. Gartner
Pierre Laforest

Two-tone — $25-$49
Jeanne Damaso
First AVS of Wichita Falls
Dolores Gibbs
In memory of Marie Edward, aunt & traveling companion of Marjorie Bullard
F. Eleanor Mattaliono
Alice M. Peterson
In memory of Judith Hess

Thumbprint — Under $25
Sara Bath
Christine Beauchamp
Elizabeth Burke
Elaine Butler
Margaret A. Califano
Lynn D. Campo
Mrs. Angelo Cardanini
Alice Dulaney
Samira James
Rebecca McMeel
Denise Miller-Dolan
Deborah Myers
North Star AV Council
Terese Richards
Jan Schindler
Carol Semrau
Lynda Vaillancourt
Peggilu Woodward

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Optimara Little Crystal

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Miniature

Contest Entry —

Let No Room Go Without African Violets

By Wade Kammin Springfield, Illinois

Like many enthusiasts who have been growing African violets for any length of time, I started with a couple of plants. I then began propagating more from leaves, eventually ending up with racks and lighting systems full of plants. Over time, my work schedule changed and didn't allow time to maintain so many plants. I narrowed my collection to my favorites, opting to abandon the racks and place plants where I could enjoy them most.

Violets Improve the View

Narrowing my collection means I now have plants on a few glass shelves in the dining room window where I can see them while I'm doing paperwork at the table that doubles as my home office.

There also are a few violets in front of the small windows that flank the fireplace in our bungalow-style home, drawing the eye to the beautiful blooms or foliage, rather than to the wall of the neighbor's house, which sits closer to ours than ideally it should.

African violets add to this windowsill houseplant display, and one sits proudly in a planter with sentimental meaning.

Pots Add to the Design

Although some of these plants, especially the minis, are wicked in simple reservoirs, many plants have their pots slipped into prettier vessels or ones that mean something to me. One African violet is sitting in a 1950s poodle-shaped planter that had been in my grandma's house when I was a child. Another is in a chipped coffee mug with a cartoon on it that always makes me laugh. The violets give life to these objects that otherwise would be stored, thrown away or simply collecting dust.

The violets give life to these objects that otherwise would be stored, thrown away or simply collecting dust.

Not Just for Windows

Most recently, during a repotting session, I couldn't quite bear to toss out some broken crowns of a trailing semi-miniature plant, so they found themselves a new home in, of all places, the bathroom — on the back of the toilet. I stuck several plants in what would normally be an oversized pot, then nestled the pot in an old round fishbowl, using blue aquarium gravel to disguise the pot. The room lacks good window light, so I plugged in a small LED desk lamp, put it on a timer, and hoped for the best. The plants filled in and started blooming, with this little display now being one of my favorites because it makes even mundane tasks like brushing my teeth more enjoyable.

Although growing African violets in a more decorative manner might mean plants are sometimes a bit asymmetrical or watering requires a quick trip throughout the house, forgoing the pressure of seeking the "perfect" plant allows me to better enjoy the daily interactions I now have with my African violets.

Trailing semi-minis (Rob's Boolaroo) fill a fishbowl with help from a small LED light. Right: A close-up of the blooming plants that brighten the bathroom.

African Violets: Good for Your Health

By Teresa Odle Email: editor@avsa.org

This issue has lots of photos and examples of how African violet growers have added the plants to their home décor or show designs. I know most *African Violet Magazine* readers don't need further convincing of the beauty and value of these plants—or to buy or start more of them—but how about a little science to try on your reluctant friends, family members or local club recruits:

A few years ago, NASA researchers released a report on how houseplants could improve indoor air quality in offices and homes. Guess "who" made the top 10 list of plants that remove chemicals and emit oxygen to improve indoor air quality? That's right, the African violet.

Although the NASA experiment focused on how to improve air in a space station, where ventilation is not possible, the findings support having lots of these lovely plants in your home. It also helps explain a growing trend toward more houseplant purchases, even among millennials. Other plants making the NASA list were mums, aloe veras, Boston ferns and the Peace Lily.

According to an article in *Inc.* by Melanie Curtin that reported on the NASA study, simply looking at a purple African violet blossom has been shown as a health benefit (the body releases a tiny amount of adrenaline, which ups energy and blood flow to the brain). Aside from the beauty and health benefits, African violets also grow well in artificial lighting. So they make a perfect home or office plant. In fact, NASA suggests having at least one houseplant for every 100 square feet of space. I'd say that's pretty easy for African violet lovers!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Chain Link

Exhibited by: Robert Clark

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Natural Garden

Exhibited by: Karyn Cichocki

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Food and Wine

Exhibited by: Barbara Festenstein

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Key

Exhibited by: Penny Moore

Trash to Treasure: A New Lease on Life

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York

A friend picked an African violet from the trash and brought it back to life on her office windowsill. I happened to see it and mentioned that it soon would need repotting. She agreed, but when I explained the process, her eyes got wider and wider with disbelief at what I was describing. The plant had buds on it and she agreed to allow me to repot it for her, after it had finished blooming.

The plant was delivered to my door a few weeks later. I took a photo of it at that time (Figure 1).

I have performed this entire procedure on African violets for friends many times over the years. Of course, I have done it for my own plants more times than I possibly can remember. After watching me perform the procedure on one of his plants, a friend remarked, "That's the closest thing to a miracle I've ever seen!" No miracle involved, but definitely a new lease on life. This procedure is so easy, and becomes even easier once you've watched it happen. Here are the next steps:

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

Figure 2 shows the plant after I stripped off all the old, spent or yellowed leaves. Now the plant was about 4 or 5 inches across, and showing all healthy, green foliage.

In Figure 3, the "neck" is quite visible where my finger points. This neck is from where the old leaves were attached.

I used an old butcher knife to cut a disc off the bottom of the old root ball (Figure 4).

I used a pair of pointed tweezers to rough up the old root ball, since it was packed solid with roots (Figure 5).

Figure 6 shows the neck after it was scraped with an X-ACTO knife. Gentle scraping removes the scar tissue from the neck where the old leaves had been attached. This allows the fresh flesh of the plant's "trunk" to form new roots.

I made ready a clean pot to accept the plant by putting a piece of fiberglass screening on the bottom and then adding soil mix (Figure 7).

Figure 8 shows the plant set into its new pot. The tablespoon in the photo was used to fill soil in around the old root ball. The pot is set into a clean saucer.

There is one "extra" leaf on the plant that should have been removed to ensure proper symmetry as the plant regrows. Can you find it?

I thought perhaps this photo essay might be a good way to illustrate this procedure to someone who has never seen it done. Doing this periodically will ensure new, fresh foliage and consistent blooming.

I am reminded of Ethel Champion's plant of Superman that she'd had for 50 years. Can you imagine how many times that plant went through this simple surgery? Even more astonishing is to think about the total length of neck that was removed over all those years!

Figure 5.

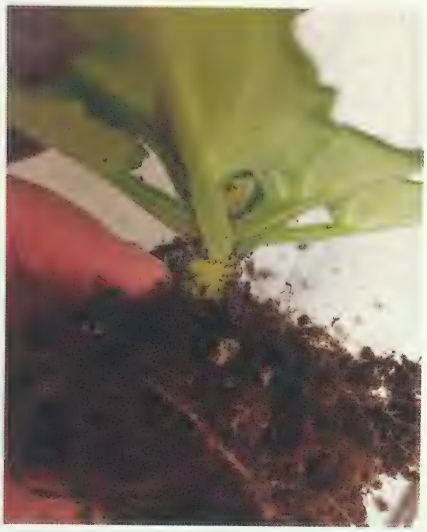


Figure 6.

Figure 7.

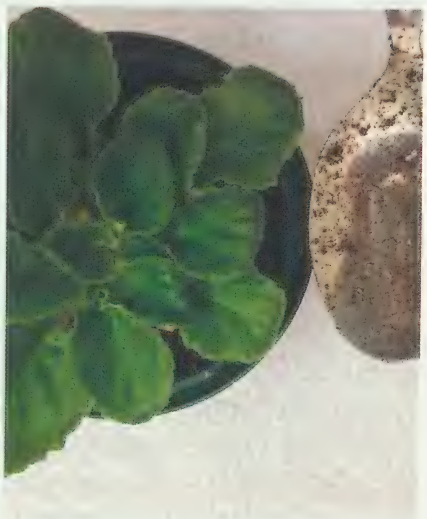


Figure 8.

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Karen Broadway Glendale, Arizona

Donations received from December 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019 Total $79

Thumbprint—Under $25

Marc DeVoir, Smith River, CA
Samira James, Teaneck, NJ
Rebecca McMeel, Houma, LA
Margaret A. Califano, Latham, NY
Angelo Cardanini, Camino, CA
Marilyn Heinrich, East Northport, NY
F. Eleanor Mattaliano, Easley, SC
Mrs. G.E. Harmon, New York, NY
Tristate AV Council, Princeton Junction, NJ
In lieu of judging fee for Marianne Gershon
Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN

Contest Entry —

Finding Balance: Collecting and Creating a Harmonious Living Space

By Ana Carlson Santa Monica, California

Email: sillappeal@aol.com

As a new AVSA member and beginning African violet grower, I am excited about this opportunity to share some of my experiences with other members who, like me, might not be as ambitious and knowledgeable as the pros, but are equally passionate about growing African violets. I started my journey in fall 2017 with a couple of clearance NOIDs in terrible shape that I purchased on a whim. Feeling encouraged by their recovery, I quickly became addicted to growing and propagating these fascinating plants.

Moving My Collection

Last year I moved across the country, bringing those original "rescues" with me. When a Google search on African violet care returned beautiful and unusual plants for sale, I started ordering named varieties online. Most of the cute plants I received still were babies and some are blooming now for the first time. My collection grew quickly, but I now am trying to keep it at a manageable size. I want to learn how to give them the best care possible and find creative ways to integrate my violets into the decor of our one-bedroom apartment. This allows me to enjoy my hobby while maximizing interaction with my plants on a daily basis.

Sometimes I wish I had an extra room to expand my collection and invest in light stands. Although this might be possible in the future, I'm happy with my current living situation, being surrounded by most of my plants as I watch TV or have dinner. If you are a professional, your plant room is your office, so to speak. But as an amateur, I have no need for such a space, and I am sure it would get overwhelming.

Saintpaulia as Favorites

Before my first African violet purchase, I had many different small foliage plants and cuttings, but of all the genera I grow, *Saintpaulia* is by far my favorite. The plants' beauty and diversity make collecting fun, but even with the incredible variety in color, flower, foliage, habit and size, they are similar to one another, as compared with all the other plants out there. I have started experimenting with displaying all my plants, including the African violets, in aesthetically pleasing ways while also giving each individual plant the conditions it needs to thrive.

Making Room

One step I took occurred soon after my husband and I moved to our current apartment. I decided not to use our breakfast bar, so we got rid of the bar stools and got clip-on grow lights instead! Most of my tropical plants enjoy life in my jungle nook, under those bright white grow lights. I now am adding to the mix some African violets that were not so happy in their previous location. I think the wilder looking hybrids with smaller single flowers, as well as trailers, blend better with my houseplants.

Can you spot the two violets in this grouping?

I eventually expanded my growing space to the empty counter, turning it into an African violet-only area. I enjoy looking at them while I cook and I am constantly reorganizing my plants. For example, I

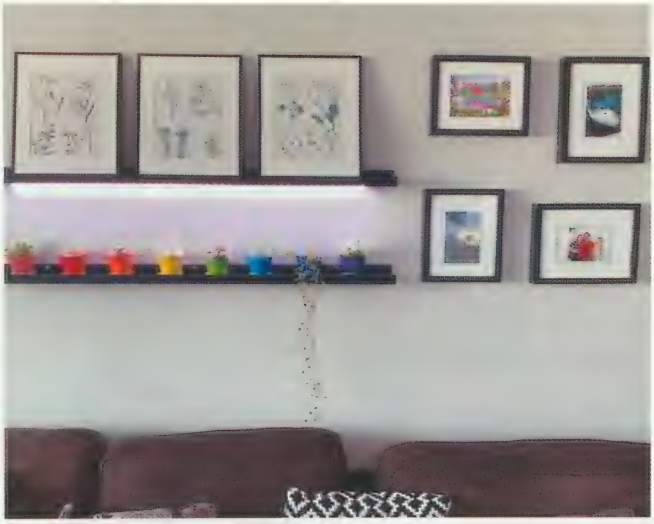
have moved my Calathea plants from under the counter because they require different humidity and the light was too intense for them.

Cooking and violeting!

Most of my violets are still small or minis, which is fun because I can have more of them. Plus, they are so adorable as individuals. I think my home would look better with very few large plants instead. But then indoor gardening would not be as enjoyable to me, so I am trying to find a balance between fun and a decluttered, clean living space. Decorating with immature plants or miniatures can be tricky. There are so many little pots that it is hard to see the plants inside them from a distance.

Plant Displays

I decided to turn some of the minis into part of a bigger installation by using an LED light strip to light up a shelf where I often keep minis and various types of recently propagated plants, including African violets. I also move the plants in this area often. I think a mixed shelf with planters, pictures and other small objects would look nice, too, but since there is not enough sun for plants to grow there, I rely on the artificial lighting attached to the bottom of the top shelf. I can change the light color and intensity, and set the schedule using an application on my phone.



These little guys look cute from up close, I promise!

I have adjusted, and will continue to adjust, my setups as needed. My small plants outgrow their containers, or sometimes problems such as pests and disease arise. The lighting I use seems to work well for the most part, because nearly all of my plants keep growing and blooming. Tweaks seem inevitable, in the same way that my first violets lived happily on my windowsill when I first brought them home but were moved a couple of feet from the window in the spring. They stayed happy and bloom constantly. These same violets now live in front of my window year-round. That is because a large, currently naked tree outside will grow back its leaves and block much of the afternoon sun in the warmer months.

I can change the light color and intensity, and set the schedule using an application on my phone.

Besides the windowsills, kitchen bar area, and the small shelf above, I have a seven-shelf unit where I like to keep trailing plants and cuttings. My original goal was to keep the shelves full, with two or three containers filled with plants growing up and down the shelves. I now am more interested in putting only

Do you prefer one or multiple plants per shelf?

one plant on each shelf for a more stylish, minimalistic display. I don't keep African violets there, because I don't think it's bright enough and it's drafty. But I would be interested in experimenting with a different location and lights in the future.

Finding Harmony

Sometimes it feels like a puzzle, trying to fit all these living things with different needs into my home. I find this quest for harmony exciting and fun, since I do not have a garden outside. Living in a small space means little flexibility in rearranging furniture, so being able to move my plants gives my home a fresh look while improving my relationship with my plant family.

I enjoy learning from trial and error, reading extensively and talking to experienced growers. I would love to hear your ideas, comments or growing tips, so feel free to contact me via email, @sillappeal on Instagram, or by visiting my blog (www.sillappeal.com).

AVSA Booster Fund

By Dianna Walston Kokomo, Illinois

January 1 to February 20, 2019 Total $460

Geneva — $100-$499
Sylvia Singh, Tiburon, CA
Byron Turner, Teague, TX
In memory of Ray Pittman from Byron Turner and Melanie Eubanks

Multicolor — $50-$99
Michael Orth, Lansing, KS
Grace Rarich, Garden State AVC, Titusville, NJ
In memory of John Cook

Two-Tone — $25-$49
Lois Buschke, Morris Plains, NJ
Susan Jacques, Marquette, MI

Thumbprint — Under $25
Margaret Califano, Latham, NY
Angelo Cardanini, Camino, CA
Lila Davis, Virginia Beach, VA
Samira James, Teaneck, NJ
Elena Martinez, Miami, FL
F. Eleanor Mattaliano, Easley, SC
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James P. Reilly, Las Cruces, NM
Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN,
North Star AV Council

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Chain Stitch
(Side 1)

Exhibited by: Judy Zinni

Chain Stitch
(Side 2)

Exhibited by: Judy Zinni

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

The 10 "Propers," Guidelines for Good Growing

By: Sandra Skalski Mullica Hill, New Jersey

At my first African violet club meeting, I was introduced to the 10 "Propers," the guidelines for growing healthy African violets. That was nearly 30 years ago, and though the basic rules of good growing remain the same, some growing practices have evolved. Who could have imagined growing under LED lights back then? Are you following the 10 "Propers," or have you developed some bad growing habits? Each of the Propers deserves a thorough treatment, but here is a brief review of the tried and true principles, updated for 2019.

Proper Soil

Use a loose, porous soil with good drainage. Most commercially grown plants are in a soil mix that works for the grower. If you buy violets from supermarkets or big box stores, they most likely are planted in a potting mix that holds a good deal of water. The reason is simple: the plants must survive the journey from greenhouse to store and then the almost certain neglect they will see on the shelves. As a beginner, you will baby them and water them. You might water them a lot. Overwatering is one of the chief causes of violet demise because violets won't tolerate wet feet. The best strategy for both new and experienced growers is to repot your new violets into your own potting mix.

African violets grow best when in soilless mixes. The mixes are called "soilless" because they contain no actual soil, but are based on peat moss and/or coir (coconut fiber), perlite, vermiculite and dolomite lime for pH adjustment. Good potting mixes are available from our AVSA commercial growers; if you are a beginner, this is a good place to start. These mixes are suitable for various methods of watering African violets and adjusted to the proper pH range (6.2 to 6.9). Bagged mixes that you find in the supermarket or hardware store tend to be on the heavier side, with very little perlite. If you want to use these mixes, be sure to cut them back by making them 40 to 50 percent perlite.

Overwatering is one of the chief causes of violet demise because violets won't tolerate wet feet.

If you are an experienced grower, you might want to blend your own soilless mix. Many growers happily share their recipes, but keep in mind, their growing conditions might differ from yours. Consider buying a pH meter or pH papers to test your mix before you use it. As with anything new in the plant room, try it on a few plants first, not your entire collection.

Proper Watering

Water with warm water when the top of the soil is dry to the touch or use the wicking or other automatic watering method. If you have only a few African violets, you can hand-water your plants. Check to see that the top inch or so of soil is dry to the touch. If you water from the top, use tepid water and be careful not to get water in the center of the plant. Dab away any water that hits foliage. You also can add water to individual saucers. With each of these methods, be sure to pour off any excess water after about one hour.

If you have several plants or are very busy, consider wick watering or mat watering. A wick, consisting of an absorbent synthetic material, is inserted into the pot,

and the other end hangs into a reservoir of water. The wick draws up the water through capillary action. The reservoir can be of any convenient size. You also can community wick water using a plastic grid, or by placing pots on a damp mat. One drawback of these community watering methods is that soil mealy bugs and some fungal diseases spread easily from plant to plant.

If you choose to use a form of wick or mat watering, be sure you use a very light potting mix, with plenty of perlite. A heavier mix (for example, one with less than 30 percent of perlite by volume) holds too much water to be suitable for wick watering.

Proper Potting

Pot size should be one-third the diameter of the plant. If you are a beginner with your first violets, this can be a confusing statement. Most of the violets you buy will be standard violets that grow in a flat rosette. Four-inch pots are ideal for these plants, because they typically will grow to be about 12 inches in diameter. Consider this a general guideline based on aesthetics and the health of the plants. Plants look their best in pots of this one-third proportion. African violets have shallow root systems and they will decline and fail to bloom if potted in oversized pots. Miniature and semi-miniature plants do best in 2 to 2-and-a-half-inch pots. Large growing standard plants can grow in 5- to 7-inch pots.

It is best to pot up young plants gradually to their maximum pot size. You can pot up plantlets in 2-inch cups to 3-inch pots or even yogurt cups. Once these plants are well rooted, you can pot them into 4-inch pots. Skipping pot sizes won't save you any time and probably will cause the plants to suffer. The plants will fill their pots with roots before they show significant leaf growth and overpotted plants are susceptible to root rot and other fungal diseases.

Proper Feeding

Dilute fertilizer to one-fourth strength in each watering. African violets benefit from constant feeding with a very diluted fertilizer. If you wick water, fill the reservoirs with the diluted fertilizer solution. If you top or bottom water, use the same weak solution on your normal watering schedule. You will find a variety of solid and liquid fertilizers suitable for African violets, but before you buy a plant fertilizer, read the label. You will see three numbers, such as 20-20-20. The first number refers to the nitrogen, which is necessary for growth and the green color (chlorophyll) of plants. The second number refers to phosphorus, which is responsible for root growth and stimulates the formation of blossoms. The third number is for potassium, which is essential for photosynthesis.

Like many of the "Propers," fertilizers deserve a more extensive discussion, but in general, look for a fertilizer with trace elements such as calcium, zinc, magnesium and iron. Read the directions on the label for guidance on how much to use. A good rule of thumb is to use one quarter of the amount recommended for occasional fertilizing. In other words, if the manufacturer recommends using one teaspoon per gallon of water for once a month feeding, use one-fourth teaspoon for constant, diluted feeding. In general, one-eighth teaspoon of a solid fertilizer and one-fourth teaspoon of a liquid fertilizer will be appropriate.

Jolly Andrea, exhibited by Sandra Skalski. Photo by Winston Goretsky.

Proper Light

Give your plants bright morning sun and afternoon sun, filtered mid-day sun or 10 to 14 hours per day of artificial lighting, with plants placed 12 to 14 inches below the light source. You don't need a fancy light setup to grow beautiful African violets. You can grow healthy, blooming plants in natural light. East- and northeast-facing windows are ideal, but if you want to grow in west- or south-facing windows, a sheer curtain can filter the light. It is especially important to turn your plants once a week so that they grow flat and don't reach for light.

African violets grow under a wide range of artificial lights, including many types of fluorescent and LED lights. The timing and placement suggested above applied to the most common grow lights at the time, T12 fluorescents. Today, T12 lamps and fixtures are slowly being replaced by T8 and T5 fixtures, and are difficult to find. If you are using T8 or T5 fluorescent tubes, reduce both your light time and distance to the plant top. There are many types of LED lights available, so it is difficult to give precise guidance on time and distance. Experiment to see what works for your setup.

How do you know your plants are getting the right amount of light? Happy plants grow in a flat rosette, and bloom freely, according to variety. Plants receiving too little light won't bloom much, if at all. The leaves might reach upward or lean to one side. The petioles (leaf stems) can grow long and leggy. Plants that are getting too much light can develop tight, bunched centers. The leaves might seem to hug the pot. Some varieties can even raise their petioles and try to shade the crown from the light. You might need to experiment to see what works best for each variety.

Proper Temperature

The ideal temperature is between 65 and 80 degrees F. In general, if you are comfortable, your violets will be, too. At temperatures below 60 F, your plants might stop growing and also are more susceptible to diseases like root rot. Below 50 F, the plants are not likely to survive. At higher temperatures, you might see leggy growth and variegated foliage can turn solid green. If you grow on a windowsill, remember that extreme temperatures outside can affect your violets on the inside. Keep your plants a few inches away from the windowpane. On hot summer days, you can use a fan to keep your plant room cooler. You also can try running your grow lights at night.

Proper Humidity

A humidity range of 40 percent to 60 percent is best for good growth and flowering. Again, if you are comfortable, your plants will be, too. Excessive dryness is more of a problem than high humidity. If you live in a dry climate or need to deal with dry winter air, consider adding water to a pebble-filled dish or tray to increase humidity.

An easy way to get rid of dust, soil or even pet hair is to wrap the end of a pencil with tape and gently tap the foliage to remove debris.

Proper Space

To ensure good air circulation, do not allow plants to touch. So many plants, so little … space! It's tempting to add a few more plants and I am as guilty of this as anyone. Crowding plants in your growing area can lead to diseases like powdery mildew, a fungal disease that makes your plants appear to be dusted with flour. You can improve air circulation in your growing area with a small fan.

If you are growing plants for a show, crowded plants won't shape up to their optimal potential. If you can see those plants on the back of the shelf, you might spot problems when they first occur. You could always add more shelves to accommodate a growing collection, but do you have the time to care for all those plants? Limit your collection to the plants you have time to care for properly. Ten healthy plants will bring you more joy than dozens of neglected specimens.

Proper Cleansing

Use a soft brush to keep foliage dust-free. Mist regularly with warm water; dry plants out of the sun. Soft cosmetic brushes are good for removing bits of soil from leaves when grooming for show, but excessive brushing can sometimes mar the foliage. An easy way to get rid of dust, soil or even pet hair is to wrap the end of a pencil with tape and gently tap the foliage to remove debris. Plants benefit from a warm water bath once or twice a year. Run warm water over the outer rows of leaves, being careful not to get water in the crown. Dab the droplets with lint-free tissue and dry out of the lights or sunshine.

Proper Spraying

Spray (only when necessary) with a recommended insecticide solution or use a systemic insecticide in the soil. When the 10 "Propers" first were written, regular spraying of plants for pests was a recommended practice. Many of the pesticides used back then are off the market now. Wisely, people are more cautious of using pesticides now, except when necessary. Following the other nine growing guidelines should keep your pest and disease problems to a minimum. However, if you have a serious problem and choose to address it with pesticides, be sure to finish the job. Most pests require at least three carefully timed sprays to eliminate all stages of their development. Spraying one or two times might leave behind resistant individuals that will be difficult to kill the next time around.

A few practices can reduce the likelihood that pests will invade your collection. Wherever you chose to buy your plants, choose only healthy specimens. Although it is tempting to "rescue" those sad plants languishing on store shelves, you eventually might regret the move. Isolate all newcomers, preferably in a separate room. If you have limited growing space, isolate these new plants in zipper bags or other clear plastic containers. Isolate for at least three months or until you are sure your new additions are pest free.

During the warmer months, pests can enter your growing area on a summer breeze or even on your clothes or your pet's fur. Don't go straight from your outdoor garden to your indoor garden. If pests show up, take swift action to eliminate them.

How did you do? Are you following the 10 "Propers?" If so, consider adding an eleventh: Proper Consistency of Care. African violets respond best to regular, consistent attention. Set aside some time every week to spend on your plants. It will be relaxing for you, and your plants will reward you with lush growth and beautiful blooms. Happy Growing!

Jersey Lilacs, exhibited by Sandra Skalski. Photo by Winston Goretsky.

Editor's Note: This review of The 10 guidelines for healthy African violet growth is a great summary of tips for new growers and a reminder for all. It also serves as an introduction to a new basics for beginners column ("My First Violets") from Sandra coming up in the July/August issue.

JOIN TODAY!

The African Violet Society of America

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(409) 839-4725
http://avsa.org
Write or call today for information

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Cajun's Freckleface Kid

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux
Standard

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Imp's Flamingo Feathers

Exhibited by: Linda Hall
Hybridized by: J. Jackson
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Sport of Rob's Chilly Willy

Exhibited by: Maureen Pratt
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Miniature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Sport of Lavender Bliss

Exhibited by: Randy McMahill
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature

Technically Speaking … or Not: How to Save Special Varieties

By Neil Lipson

Email: ndlipson@gmail.com • (610) 356-6183

I just lost a very important African violet grower and dear friend last week. At one time she had nearly 100 varieties, many of them one of a kind. For the past 35 years, she was generous about giving me baby plants and teaching me how to grow them. In fact, she was exceptional in her generosity.

However, many growers fade away from our hobby and their collections dwindle. Some pass away, often isolated from other violet growers. Their plants don't have names on them because the grower knew a variety just by sight. Other growers would have no idea of the variety, and it is not advised to identify a NOID (no identification) from a photograph.

What You Can Do as a Grower

To keep varieties going and identified, here's what to do throughout the time you grow: First, make sure to keep track of all your plants' identities. First Class is an invaluable database that makes verifying identification easy. Second, if a variety is a rare, vintage or just one of your very special varieties, ask a friend to grow one as a backup. Maybe you can even have more than one friend grow the plant to minimize worrying about losing yours. What can happen as a result of not backing up like this? A lot!

I have had several special plants, such as a rare Sugar 'n' Spice, that I crowned to encourage baby suckers. All four reverted but I had shared one years earlier with a friend and was able to get it back into circulation.

Some growers "drift" away from the general African violet population. Many older growers have kept a low profile and stopped going to meetings, so they've lost touch with violet-growing friends and might not realize how rare some of their violets are. When a friend who grows passes away, no one else is prepared to take care of these special violets and the family might toss them out. To me, this is very sad.

> The most "unstable" of the varieties is the chimera.

Caution When Repotting

I have seen people repot in "groups" where they put two or three plants on the table to repot, and accidentally mix them up. This complicates matters and is why experts recommend repotting one plant at a time. It might be a little more work, but it really is worth it.

I've been told by experienced growers that as many as 30 to 40 percent of classic African violets have slowly died away. Today's commercial growers keep coming out with new varieties, but not the old classic ones; they don't even have access to the classics. The yellow violets are an example.

My vintage Concord chimera (with thick stripes) in 2008.

Unstable Varieties

The most "unstable" of the varieties is the chimera, which makes up half of my collection. Chimeras can revert slowly or suddenly. The second-most unstable are edged-flower violets. These can change suddenly from a thin stripe to a thick one, or vice-versa.

Despite loss of some of the African violets of years past, with thousands of new varieties, there's no shortage of beautiful varieties. Just remember to give away leaves and make sure your friends still have the plant. We really have to stay on top of this, or the variety will be gone. Conduct an inventory of your plants, and if possible, check up on friends to make sure they have important plants.

One environment is not ideal for all African violets. Some prefer cooler temperatures, some need more fertilizer, nitrogen or other nutrients. Having all your plants in a happy environment can be a huge undertaking but is worth the extra effort.

My vintage Concord chimera in 2019.

Is it worth it to you and the violet community to keep varieties going? I think so, from the reaction of my friends who have lost an important plant. Thank goodness for sharing, including through Facebook groups such as AVSA, African Violet Buddies and African Violet Nerds.

In the AVSA Store

"Perfectly Pittman" Video

This hour-long video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman. It's perfect for anyone who loves African violets and streps - or any flowers - and for AVSA members who have known this treasured couple of the violet world.

AVAILABLE on the AVSA WEBSITE. DVD and Thumbdrive format $20

The AVSA Library Committee gives special thanks to Andrea Worrell and Joe Bruns for the countless hours they volunteered to make this video possible.

Growing Up in my House

By George Ramirez Morgan City, Louisiana

Editor's note: This fun article by George Ramirez ran years ago in the Dixie African Violet Society newsletter, but when Belinda Thibodeaux shared it, I felt it was a perfect, fun message just before the national show. Enjoy!

Hi! My name is "You Old Smoothie," and I want to talk to you today about my childhood and the kinds of houses I grew up in. I was born about one year ago in a small room, attached to my mother with five or six other children. What a crowd! I hardly had enough room to stretch. Well, when I was about six weeks old, I got separated from my mother and the other kids and went to live with a friend of my mother's. I had a small room all my own — at last! I didn't have to fight anybody else for something to eat!

My Own Room

My little room had all kinds of nice things for me to eat. I finally had enough room for my little arms and legs to roam around without fighting somebody else for space. It was like living in paradise. The sun would shine for about 10 hours every day and it never rained. Was this really south Louisiana? Whenever I got thirsty, I would just wrap one of my arms or legs around this little rope that hangs from the bottom of my room and floats in the swimming pool below, and take a sip. Sometimes they let the pool go dry and I get thirsty. Boy, then I wish it would rain! I don't like it when I have nothing to drink. When I get really thirsty, my little leaves start to droop and I don't look good.

The other day, I was just lying around, enjoying the sun, when all of a sudden I noticed these little things that were starting to stick out next to my body where my leaves were connected. I panicked! (Oh, no, pimples, and I'm only two months old.) Boy, was I relieved when I heard the fellow who's taking care of me (I'll call him George) tell someone, "I think I see some buds coming out on You Old Smoothie." I didn't know I was going to make flowers.

> I've got news for him! I'm not going to any show without flowers.

Moving Day

When I was about three and a half months old, we moved. Good thing, too, because I was starting to feel like I was back with my mother with no room to move. I got a nice new, larger room with some fresh food to eat. I had more space to stretch out, but funny thing: I got another rope hanging out of the bottom of my room. This time the swimming pool in the room under mine was much bigger; I thought maybe I won't run out of water. The only thing I didn't like about changing rooms was that George took off some of my old leaves. That hurt, because they were some of the first ones I had grown. In my new house, I have more to eat and the leaves that he left can get bigger. I like having only big leaves, anyway, because I look neater. I also noted that I now was able to have more flowers. I like having plenty of flowers 'cause George likes that.

You know, when you get to be my age you think you know everything. But the other day I heard George tell someone that the white markings on my leaves meant that I was a "variegate." All this time, I thought I was a "Scorpio." I still feel like I'm in paradise. Nothing to do but lie in the sun 10 hours a day and eat and drink. Once a week, George straightens my leaves, fills the swimming pool, takes off my dead flowers and turns me around, and then back in the sun I go. What a life!

You're not going to believe this — we're moving again! This guy must never pay our rent; we've only been here four months. WOW! What a house! I'm going to get lost in my room. Ouch! There he goes again taking off some of my old leaves. Oh no, he's taking off some of my pretty flowers. Why did he do that? I'm going to have plenty of space to stretch out in this room. I'm even getting some fresh food and a new rope to hang out of the bottom of my room . . . and a new swimming pool!

Going to Show

I don't know if it's my imagination, but it looks like the days are getting longer and the nights shorter. I also feel like I'm getting bigger and stronger since George started taking all my buds off. I heard George tell someone the other day that we were going to a show in a couple of months. I've got news for him! I'm not going to any show without flowers. The days really are getting longer and the sun is out for 12 hours. I went for a drink of water yesterday and what a kick! I don't know what they put in the pool, but it'll make hair grow on your leaves. I still don't know why I can't have any flowers — the show's only two months away.

Well, George came by today and filled the pool, but he didn't take off any buds. I wonder if he forgot or if he thinks I've gotten big enough. Besides, the days are getting even longer. The sun now shines for 13 hours a day. We must be getting into the rainy season. It's starting to rain once a week, usually early in the morning, and does it feel good! Nothing like a good bath of warm water. It makes me breathe so much easier. I'm getting so nervous. Just one more week before the show. I heard George tell someone that I was beautiful. I'm so glad he likes me.

I'm Here

What a place! George brought me into a room full of other plants. I've never seen anything like it. I don't see any of my sisters and brothers. I guess I'm the only one in my family that made it to the show. I heard some people talking about judges coming tomorrow to give out ribbons. I hope I get one.

Well, the judging is over and I didn't win. I thought I was the prettiest one in the show, but NOOOOOOO! Some plant named "Magnolia" was the best. Whoever heard of a plant named "Magnolia?" I thought it was a tree! The judges said I was the second-best one here. I think I did well because George is happy. I'll just try harder next year. See ya!

AVSA Funding Solutions Campaign Report

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Donations received from January 10, 2019 through March 1, 2019 Total $1,085

$500-$999
Tampa AVS, Brandon, FL

$100-$499
Phyllis Nash, Riverside, CA
Garden State AVC, Titusville, NJ
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In lieu of speaker's fee for Joyce Stork

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Under $25
Rosalyn Barclay, Ann Arbor, MI
Tristate AV Council, Princeton Junction, NY

African Violets in Ukraine

By Hanna Didkovska Eindhoven, Netherlands

Editor's note: Hanna is from Kyiv, Ukraine, and has grown Russian and Ukrainian hybrids there and in her current home. She has participated in Ukrainian violet and gesneriad shows. The plants pictured were grown and photographed by Hanna unless otherwise noted in the caption.

Growing African violets is very popular in Ukraine and African violet shows are held in many Ukrainian cities. Every Autumn, Kyiv hosts the Annual Ukrainian Violets and Gesneriads Show, where growers and hybridizers from all over Ukraine represent their flowers. Plants at the show must follow requirements such as healthiness and floriferousness; of course great care is taken to show symmetrical and plain foliage. The most popular African violets at these shows are compact violets. Large hybrids, though less popular, still find their fans. Ordinary growers, on the other hand, like hybrids with big or even huge flowers and it doesn't matter to them whether leaves are wavy or plain. Last but not least are the chimeras. These flowers always take their special place in growers' collections.

Growing Conditions

In Ukraine, African violets are grown both in natural light and under artificial lights. Growing on a windowsill is common because many growers don't have enough room for a growing setup. So, a windowsill becomes a good option for them to grow these beautiful flowers. Growing violets under the natural light on a windowsill might be slightly challenging, but the violets thank their owner with beautiful flowers.

Temperature in a common Ukrainian house allows African violets to bloom all year round. Even so, violets grown on the windowsill might not flower from December to February. However, in the southern part of Ukraine, summer temperatures can be relatively high for violet flowering.

My violets in a sunny window.

The most common way to water in Ukraine is from the top; many growers prefer this way, but wick watering also is used. I use wick watering for all my adult African violets and gesneriads, and a capillary mat for the baby plants, which works better. Right after repotting, however, I water my plants from the top.

Typical African violet potting mix in Ukraine is a blend of a Baltic peat moss, perlite and vermiculite in different proportions. The potting mix I use for my violets and gesneriads contains equal parts of these components. Also, I prefer to add a coco coir to this mix. Not every coco coir is suitable; some lower quality coirs contain more salts.

Among popular fertilizers in Ukraine are Peters water-soluble crystals and Osmocote fertilizer with controlled nutrient release. The water-soluble Peters fertilizer is convenient because it comes in different formulas so growers can choose the right nutrients for each growth stage. For example, the most suitable formula for an adult African violet is 10-30-20, but for a baby plant or a slow-growing violet, a better formula is 20-20-20. When preparing violets for a show,

10-52-10 is a wonderful formula. Osmocote with a controlled release is a good choice for busy growers. Just one application of this long-acting fertilizer every 5 to 6 months is needed, and it provides all the necessary major and trace nutrients for the plants. All my plants, including African violets and other *Streptocarpus*, are happy with these fertilizers.

Ukrainian Hybrids and Hybridizers

During the past few years many new hybridizers have appeared in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. So, there now are many new violet hybrids, but they differ a great deal from one another. Among them are wonderful hybrids with a large beautiful flower, unique color or shape, or a lovely crown with decent leaves.

Of course, there are many more hybridizers than possible to fit in a single article, so I'll mention the most interesting Ukrainian hybridizers and hybrids in my opinion.

LE-Aramis from Elena Lebetskaia.

Elena Lebetskaia

Let's start with one of my most beloved African violets: LE-Aramis by Olena Lebetska. Olena Lebetska also is known as Elena Lebetskaia in Russian translation. She has been engaged in hybridizing for many years and has introduced a lot of standard, mini and trailer violets. Favorites from E. Lebetskaia include:

ЛЕ-Арамис (LE-Aramis). Large semidouble stars of dark-blue color and elongated petals. Plain and symmetrical foliage with middle green leaves. LE-Aramis has beautiful large flowers of bright blue color, which is my favorite! This African violet is always in bloom and can produce up to nearly 60 flowers at a time. The name Aramis is given in honor of a fictional character in the adventure novel "The Three Musketeers" by French writer Alexandre Dumas.

In Ukraine, African violets are grown both in natural light and under artificial lights.

ЛЕ-Бетельгейзе (LE-Betelgeuse). Very large double red flowers with slightly ruffled edge. Plain, dark green foliage. Standard. It's a really delightful red color in double large flowers on the lovely green leaves. This violet is floriferous.

ЛЕ-Прекрасная Креолка (LE-Prekrasnaya Kreolka, LE-Beautiful Creole Girl). Semidouble blue-ink stars with white and green ruffled edge. Compact standard with symmetrical foliage. LE-Prekrasnaya Kreolka is a bright and easy-growing violet and always has a lot of flowers.

ЛЕ-Мачо (LE-Macho). Very large semidouble black-burgundy stars with white thin outline. Floriferous with strong flower stalks under symmetrical and plain crown. LE-Macho is a very attractive and easy-to-grow violet.

Bloom on LE-Izolda.

ЛЕ-Изольда (LE-Izolda). Large double white flowers with pink blush and pink frilled edge. Plain foliage

with white variegation. It has a beautiful combination of bright flowers and variegated leaves on a decent crown. Floriferous. The name Izolda is given in honor of the Irish princess Isolde from the romance legend love story. Izolda is a transliteration from Isolde.

ЛЕ-Роза Ветров (LE-Roza Vetrov, LE-The Windrose). White double star flowers with rose-crimson outline and deeply fringed yellow-green edges. The standard foliage is wavy and light or medium green. This hybrid has a beautiful unique flower shape like a tea rose. The crown is big and the leaf is very wavy. This hybrid grows well under good lighting, but growing it in a sunny window can cause curling and a tight rosette.

The tea rose-like flower of LE-Roza Vetrov from E. Lebestskaia.

ЛЕ-Фата Моргана (LE-Fata Morgana). Large double-rose flowers with bold fuchsia edge and bright green frills. Light and medium green wavy foliage. Standard. LE-Fata Morgana is interesting because of its double flower shape. It looks like the flower doesn't fully open. This hybrid has a slightly wavy leaf but can form a nice crown.

Natalia Kozak

Natalia Kozak is a Ukrainian violet hybridizer from Odessa. She started her hybridizing work in 2012 with a standard violet and her first results were presented to the public in 2014. She now has standard hybrids and has presented semiminiature and miniature series with big flowers. The names of Natalia's African violet hybrids begin with the prefix NK-.

NK-Odarochka grown and hybridized by Natalia Kozak.

Natalia's goals in hybridizing are large double flowers and a nice compact crown. She cares for harmony in a whole plant. Also, she's looking for interesting color variations and forms, like longifolia foliage and bell-shaped flowers. She has standard hybrids with longifolia foliage and large flowers like in НК-Шербурские Зонтики (NK-Sherburskiye Zontiki, NK- Les Parapluies de Cherbourg), НК-Фанфан-Тюльпан (NK-Fanfan Tulip, NK-Fanfan la Tulipe) and НК-Императорский сад (NK-Imperatorskiy Sad, NK-The Imperial Garden). These hybrids, except those with longifolia leaves, have a cup-like flower that doesn't open fully. In cold conditions it can look like a bell flower. The bloom is abundant and continuous.

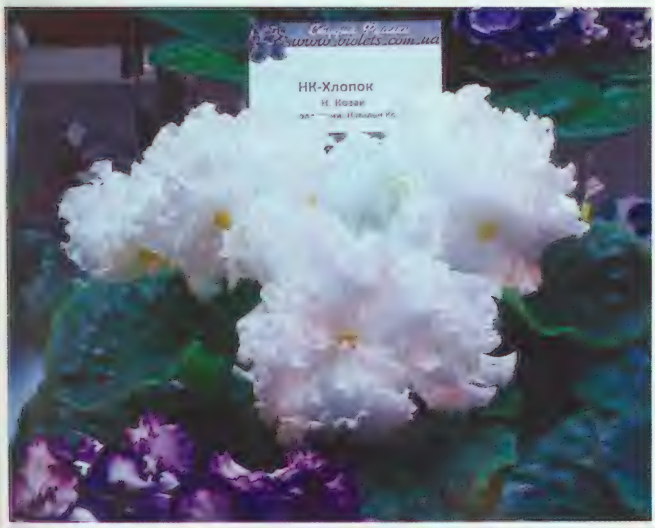
Natalia's goals in hybridizing are large double flowers and a nice compact crown.

Natalia has been working on new series of variegated standard and variegated trailers. Some hybrids by Natalia Kozak are:

НК-Лилон-Лила (NK-Lilon-Lila). White, big and bulky double flowers with lavender-purple watercolor fingerprint. Foliage is plain with dark green leaves. The name is taken from a song in the musical miniseries

"D'Artagnan and Three Musketeers" and refers to a flower color (lavender-purple).

НК-Хлопок (NK-Khlopok, NK-Cotton Flower). Snow-white double and semidouble wavy flowers. Abundant flowering. Middle green foliage.



NK-Khlopok grown and hybridized by N. Kozak.

НК-Дюк де Ришелье (NK-The Duc de Richelieu). Lilac-blue flowers with deeply frilled edges. Middle green variegated foliage. The Duc de Richelieu was one of the founders of the city of Odessa, Natalia's native city.

НК-Женственность (NK-Zhenstvennost, NK-Femininity). Very large light pink flowers. Plain crown with dark green foliage.

НК-Вечерняя Одесса (NK-Vechernyaya Odessa, NK-Evening Odesa). Very large, up to 8 cm (about 3.1 inches), double stars with deeply wavy petals of dark blue-purple color. It has a beautiful flower shape. Plain foliage. The dark flowers have a color like a beautiful evening in Natalia's beloved city of Odessa.

НК-Незнакомая Звезда (NK-Neznakomaya zvezda, NK-Unfamiliar Star). Large semidouble dark lilac stars with a white edge. Crown variegation. Semiminiature. This hybrid is a pretty big-flowered semiminiature from Natalia's new series.

НК-Одарочка (NK-Odarochka, a traditional Ukrainian name). Large pink stars. Crown variegation. Semiminiature. This also is a big-flowered semimini from Natalia's new series.

Dmytro Denysenko

Dmytro Denysenko is a new name among violet hybridizers (his hybrids have the prefix Dn-). Dmytro is interested in growing plants not only for the hobby; he is a biologist who has studied plant physiology at a university. He's been hybridizing for some years, but so far, he has represented only a few hybrids. Dmytro is working on new unique features or their combinations. One of the most interesting of Dmytro's violet hybrids is Dn-Рожева Конвалія (Dn-Rozheva Konvaliya, Dn-Pink Lily of the Valley). It has awesome pink bell flowers with deeply frilled edges and dark-green plain leaves. Also, Dmytro has some hybrids with variegated girl foliage: Dn-Эксклюзив (Dn-Eksklyuziv, Dn-Exclusive), Dn-Абрикоска (Dn-Abrikoska, Dn-Pretty Apricot). He also has a few with bright "fantasy" flowers: Dn-November Rain, Dn-Зоряне Сяйво (Dn-Zoryane Syayvo, Dn-Stars Shine). Now he's working on new series of large-flowered hybrids with interesting and colorful eyes.

Dmytro Denysenko's Dn-Rozheva Konvalia, grown and photographed by D. Denysenko.

When talking about Ukrainian hybridizers, I cannot fail to mention a young Ukrainian streptocarpus hybridizer like Dmytro Demchenko (hybrids with the prefix Dem-). His streptocarpus hybrids with big flowers and bright colors are stunning. He emphasizes his hybrids' viability and long flowering periods and he believes that a beautiful *Streptocarpus* shouldn't be difficult to grow, so he tries to add streptocarpus hybrids that people can grow with minimal care.

Contest Entry —

Insect and Mite Pests of African Violets: Know Your Enemy!

By Bill Chaney La Pine, Oregon

All us who love African violets and their relatives fear infestation by mites or insects that can ruin our beautiful plants and spoil all our hard work. The worst possible advice we can hear is when experts advise us to "toss out plants and start over" because of one of these tiny pests. The most feared of these are mites, thrips and mealybugs.

I am a retired entomologist who spent much of my 35-year career helping people diagnose and treat their insect problems. I was introduced to African violets by my grandmother, who grew "both" varieties of African violets (dark purple and light purple) in her kitchen on top of her old Frigidaire in good morning light, and I have loved them ever since. I felt that perhaps I can offer some information on insects and mites that violet lovers can use to avoid problems and deal with problems if they arise.

Cyclamen mite.

Mites

Mites actually are not insects; adults have eight legs rather than six, and there are many different types. Not all mites are bad; some are very important predators of other mites. The mites we are concerned about, however, are nasty little pests that are destructive to plants and very hard to spot and eradicate. Although spider mites can infest violets, the two main mite pests of violets and their relatives are cyclamen mites and broad mites.

Cyclamen mites are very tiny and pinkish orange; the immature stages look like adults but are translucent. You need at least a 20X hand lens (or a microscope) to see cyclamen mites. There are USB-powered microscopes (some up to 200X) that are relatively inexpensive and quite effective for finding tiny pests. Broad mites also are very tiny and appear translucent to pale brown.

Broad mite.

Both of these mites distort the leaves in the crown. Eggs are laid on young leaves and hatch into immature mites that have only six legs. The young can become adults and begin laying eggs in only a couple of weeks. Adult male mites carry young female mites to new leaves or plants (if leaves touch). Mites cannot fly. Mites love exactly the same conditions as our plants, and populations can explode quickly because female mites can lay up to 80 eggs in their 1- to 2-week lifespan.

Thrips

As odd as it sounds, there is no such thing as a "thrip." The word thrips is both singular and plural. Thrips are insects that love tight places, and, like mites, not all are bad guys. Some thrips species are predatory on other thrips and soft-bodied insects. But the two main species we are concerned with are the western flower thrips and the greenhouse thrips. Both species have winged adults that fly or float on air currents to infest new plants. They rip open plant cells and feed on the contents, leaving scars and distorted growth. Adult thrips can be seen with the naked eye, but young thrips are quite small. The young are yellow to translucent and the adults vary in color from yellow to black.

Western flower thrips adult.

Female thrips lay their eggs on or in plant leaves. The eggs can hatch into young that become new adults in 2 to 5 weeks (depending on temperature). The first telltale sign of a thrips infestation in violets might be spilled pollen. Thrips love to feed on pollen, so they open pollen sacs and spill pollen on the blooms. Because they fly and have a very broad host range, they can come into a plant growing area from a number of sources.

Do not bring cut flowers or blooming potted plants home and place them near your African violets. It is a good idea to keep "sticky cards" in your growing area to alert you if flying thrips are in the area. These are inexpensive and widely available in garden centers. Yellow or blue cards both are effective in attracting thrips.

Mealybugs

These pests are related to scale insects and feed by sucking plant juices, usually at or below the soil. They are soft bodied and adults are covered in white wax. The wax is thought to protect them from attack by predators and from moisture loss. Immature mealybugs often lack this wax and are yellow to pink in color.

Ground mealybug.

There are several species of mealybugs, but it is the ground mealybug that we usually see. Only male mealybugs can fly, and these are rarely seen. Unfortunately for the male mealybugs, their female counterparts do not need to mate to lay eggs. Mealybugs can lay 100 to 200 eggs over a 2- to 4-week period. The eggs usually are laid in silken sacs at or below the soil line. Adults move very little, but the young are much more active and move from plant to plant when conditions allow.

Adult thrips can be seen with the naked eye, but young thrips are quite small.

Other Pests

A host of other pests can infect our plants, but few of these are as serious as the ones mentioned above. Aphids sometimes can find their way to the growing area because these tiny soft-bodied insects have a winged form for flying. Yellow sticky cards also are good for detecting the movement of aphids. The first sign of aphids might be their white cast skins, similar to a

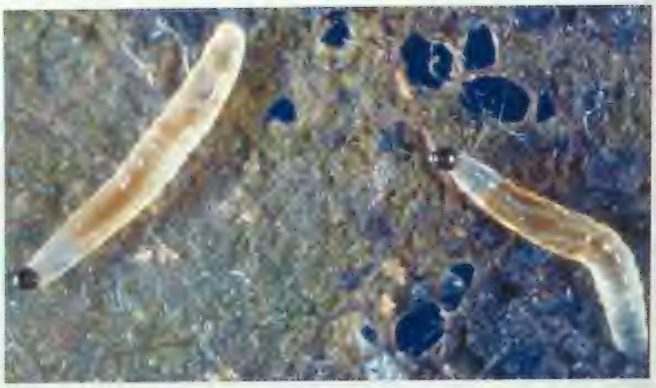
snake's shed skin. Aphid populations can grow very quickly; all aphids you see are female insects and are born pregnant (without mating), a condition known as telescoping generations. Again, be careful about bringing cut flowers or potted plants that could be infested with aphids into places near your growing areas.

Aphids.

Springtails sometimes are seen around potted plants, but these tiny insects are not a serious threat to African violets. They can be distinguished by their jumping (or springing) movement, propelled by a unique structure on the underside of their bodies. Springtails love peat moss and primarily feed on decaying roots and other organic matter.

Springtails.

Fungus Gnats are annoying, small, delicate flies that have immature stages resembling small, thin worms. Their larvae need a semi-aquatic environment (like capillary mats, or under plant trays). The adults are harmless to plants, but quite annoying.



Fungus gnat larvae and adult.

Prevention

By far the most important thing I can stress is that the best way to deal with any pest is to avoid it in the first place. Most of us are growing our plants in our homes, so any pests we encounter likely were brought into the house by us. The absolute rule that we must all follow is to assume that any new plant could be harboring a pest that could spread throughout our collection and spell disaster. So, rule number 1 is to isolate all new plants, even those from your most trusted friends. Isolation of new material is the key to any successful pest management program for our plants.

So, rule number 1 is to isolate all new plants, even those from your most trusted friends.

Photos by Jack Kelly Clark and courtesy of the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Plaid Skirt

Exhibited by: Sandra Skalski
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature

AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson, Affiliate Chair

Email: twajda1@comcast.net

It's summertime and the living is ... hectic? It seems that there is simply too much to get done over the summer. If your club has summer meetings, it's easy to keep in touch with your violet-growing friends. But if your club skips summer meetings, you should make an effort to keep in touch, especially with your newest members. It's easy for people to lose interest in their club when nothing is happening. You don't want to have any summer dropouts.

Update Your Club Information

It's been wonderful to have so many clubs updating their information via the AVSA website. It's so quick and easy — no envelope or stamps required. One thing I've failed to mention is that if your information on the website is current, but there has never been an update posted, please let me know that your club information is correct. You do not have to do a full online update; just drop me an email and I'll add an update date for your club. We are trying to make sure all the club information is up-to-date. Also, if you know of a club in your state that is no longer active, please email me, along with Amy Carruth in the AVSA office.

Judging School

Thanks to Tom Glembocki, the Events page of the AVSA website now has a special area to post Judging School information. When you enter your event, the "Type of Event" selection will be Judging School. A PDF document of the information will be formed and posted in the Judging School area.

New Clubs

We have a long list of members working to start a club:

- Laura Carpenter: Lancaster, CA; Phone: 661-940-3990
- Mary Ann Markey: Port Charlotte, FL; Email: drmaograd y@gmail.com
- John Geiser: Grand Rapids, MI; Email: johnrgeiser@gmail.com
- Susan Jacques: Marquette, MI; Email: susan@robertjacques.com
- Joanne Hawks: Greensboro, NC; Email: johawks21@gmail.com
- Vikki Ivey: Greenville, SC; Email: vivey@att.net
- Sheila Black: Roanoke, VA; Email: sheilarblack@cox.net
- Alice Person: Madison, WI; Email: peters56@tds.net
- Jennie Lawrence: Laramie, WY; Email: missjeannae@yahoo.com
- Christine Strain: Richardton, ND; Email: christinestrain22@yahoo.com
- Pam Brown: Buckhannon, WV; Email: psbrn0249@gmail.com

> ... the Events page of the AVSA website now has a special area to post Judging School information.

Hopefully, someone will be interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact the Affiliate Chair for help.

There are several states that do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

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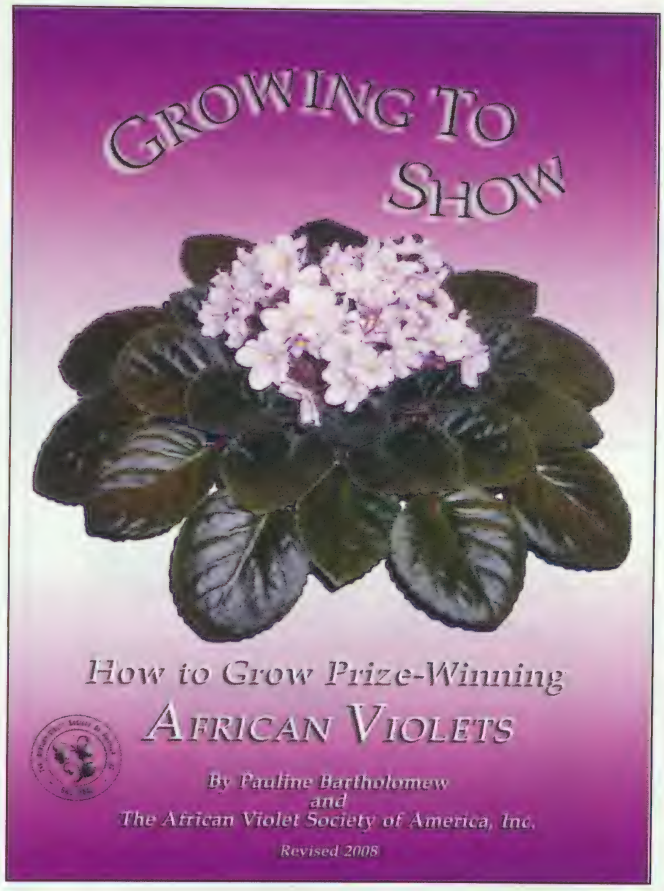

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Tips on Watering

July • August 2019 Volume 72 Number 4 avsa.org

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MEMBERSHIP AND PROMOTION: Send ideas, offers to help, requests for assistance to Neil Lipson, 29 S. Ardmore Ave., Bromall, PA 19008. *Email:* ndlipson@gmail.com.

AFFILIATES: For information or how to organize a chapter, write Jeri Anderson, 1640 N. Kelly Place, Tucson, AZ 85715. *Email:* twajda1@comcast.net.

AVSA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION: Charles Ramser, 2413 Martin St., Wichita Falls, TX 76308. *Email:* charles.ramser @msutexas.edu.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMERCIAL SALES & EXHIBITS: Lynn Lombard, 4710 W Justin Lane, Spokane, WA 99208. For information on convention entries or sales room, contact Lynn Lombard. *Email:* lynn_lombard@att.net.

CONVENTION AWARDS: Send suggestions to: Sharon Gartner, 5036 Paradise Pond Lane, Jacksonville, FL 32207. *Email:* svioletlady@yahoo.com. Send contributions to AVSA, 1310 IH-10 S, Suite 100, Beaumont, TX 77707.

CONVENTION PROGRAM: Send special requests for workshop programs or interesting speakers to Kathy Lahti, Convention Director, 4157 Oliver Ave. N.W., Annandale, MN 55302. *Email:* lahti@lakedalelink.net. If interested in sponsoring a national convention in your area, contact Convention Director.

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RESEARCH: Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified, potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304.

SHOW SCHEDULE APPROVER: For information on Shows, AVSA Awards and approving schedules, write to: Meredith Hall, 130 County Road 151, Riesel, TX 76682. *Email:* m.hall@reagan.com. **Do not send Show Schedules by Email; this address is for information ONLY.**

PRICES FOR AVSA ROSETTES: SSA Packet with no rosettes $6. Orders for rosettes must be specific as to which is needed—standard, species, mini-semi; they may be mixed, color and size all same price. **All rosettes are $5 each, added to price of SSA packet.**

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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 72 Number 4

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Buckeye Nostalgia
Exhibited by: Wayne Geeslin
Hybridized by: P. Hancock
Standard
Best African Violet in Show, AVSA, 2019
Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Sue Ramser

2413 Martin St. • Wichita Falls, TX 76308
Email: ramserwf@wf.net

To Our AVSA Friends:

It is indeed an honor to be elected and serve you, our members, as your President. Thank you for your vote of confidence.

The 2019 Houston Convention is now in the history books and what a great convention it was, with more than 600 show entries. I would be remiss if I did not recognize and thank our Convention Co-Chairs, **Anne Nicholas** and **Penny Smith-Kerker**, and our Convention Show Co-Chairs, **Glenda Williams** and **Robbie McMeel**. Thank you to all the convention and show committee chairs who helped to make this convention and show such a success. Thank you to **Kathy Lahti**, AVSA Convention Chair, for all the time and talents it took to successfully work with the Houston Marriott Westchase Hotel and their staff to ensure our members had a great convention experience.

Congratulations to all the show winners (see a full list on our website and a partial list on page 32). Congratulations to our Society Awards recipients (page 10), Publications Awards recipients (page 6) and our AVM Article Contest winners (page 8). Keep writing those educational and thought-provoking articles.

Congratulations and welcome to our newly elected officers and directors. We are here to answer your questions and listen to your concerns and we welcome your suggestions to make AVSA the very best organization we can be. We are a volunteer organization with the exception of our office manager, Amy Carruth, and our *AVM* editor, Teresa Odle. If you have time and a talent you would share with AVSA, please feel free to contact me or any of your officers. Volunteers always are needed and welcomed. Several committees would welcome an additional member to further their work.

We want to keep the lines of communication open.

Dr. Richard Nicholas announced at the Annual Meeting that the AVSA office building is in contract pending the FHA inspection, which already had been scheduled. Also, the Board of Directors approved a new logotype presented by the Marketing Committee and the logotype was introduced to members at the Annual Meeting. Look for it soon in our publications and on social media. The new logotype does not replace the AVSA Seal.

It is our challenge and goal for the next two years to increase membership through reaching out to the following target groups: international growers, Millennials and the retired or about to retired. We also want to retain those individuals who are current members or bring back those who have failed to renew their membership recently. We must think "outside the box" for ways to reach these four groups. Your Executive Committee welcomes your ideas and suggestions.

Another goal is **communication**. Communication from you, our members, to your Executive Committee and Board of Directors and from your Executive Committee to you, our members, is key to the success of AVSA. If you have an idea, concern or suggestion, please feel free to contact me or any of the Executive Committee listed in your *AVM*. We want to keep the lines of communication open.

As Dr. Richard Nicholas would say, "Violets Connect Us" and I say African Violets **Continue** to Connect Us!

Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

PO Box 1828 • Ruidoso Downs, NM 88346
Email: editor@avsa.org

I have been looking forward to attending the 2019 Annual Convention and Show since I first was hired last year. And it was worth the wait! I still feel overwhelmed by the size and scope of the show, the plants and supplies for purchase from our Commercial Members and the enthusiasm and dedication of all our members who volunteer each convention and throughout the year.

About Volunteers

I have worked as editor for several nonprofit organizations and have never before witnessed the level of participation and support I see from AVSA members. The energy and passion with which you all grow and show your plants is evident. Perhaps less evident is the generosity you display in sharing your knowledge with others in person, through workshops at the local and national level, and in *AVM* articles.

I'm excited about the quality and quantity of contributions we receive from regular columnists, contest entries and others. Our members have expressed a desire for a variety of content in *AVM*, and the only way to achieve this is with lots of contributions about lots of topics.

Let's Talk About Themes

When I began as editor, I received suggestions from Editorial Board members and others to establish some themes in issues to help spark new and creative ideas from writers. And it has worked. If an issue emphasizes a theme such as design, we're more likely to receive a few articles on design or identify some people to interview. Sometimes, we receive a lot of theme-related articles, and other times, we receive few. No matter how many articles appear on a suggested topic, we always will include our regular departments and plenty of general content about growing African violets.

Use of "themes" and editorial calendars is a common practice for magazines and journals. *AVM* has unique challenges because of the wide and varied interests of our members (for example, some grow for show and others just for fun). With the help of the Editorial Board, I do my best to include features and photographs of interest to as many readers as possible.

Article Contest

We have revised the article contest (see page 8) and publications awards to begin providing an award each issue. Watch the September issue for our first announcement of winners. Although we suggest "themes" (more like writing prompts), contest entries and other articles **do not** have to be related to the theme, as long as they relate to our hobby. Members and nonmembers alike are eligible for awards. This change should help recruit new writers (and hopefully, a few new members) while rewarding the excellent contributions from current members.

Again, the best way to ensure an assortment of quality articles in each issue is for readers to contribute. If you cannot write for the magazine, I welcome your ideas for topics or experts we can contact about those topics.

Thank you for all your positive comments on the magazine, especially at the Annual Convention. I am looking forward to seeing you all again in Little Rock next year!

(One final note: Thank you all for your patience in waiting a little longer for this issue so we could include content and photos from the Annual Convention).

Office Update

By Amy Carruth

1310 IH-10 S, Suite 100 • Beaumont, TX 77707
Email: office@avsa.org

The AVSA office is settling in after another great convention and show in Houston, Texas, where we had a total of 302 registrants. The show was beautiful and we had several vendors selling plants and supplies. The **Lone Star African Violet Council**, along with many volunteers, did an amazing job hosting this year. I would like to thank all the volunteers, especially those who took time out of their day to help at registration. There were so many who stepped up and helped and I really appreciate it. It was great meeting new attendees and catching up with old friends.

Also, I would like to give a special thanks to **Kathy Lahti,** AVSA Convention Director, for all her hard work to make the convention a success. She goes above and beyond to make sure we all have a great convention. The local chairs, **Anne Nicholas, Penny Smith-Kerker, Glenda Williams and Robbie McMeel,** made sure the convention was fun for all! I hope you can join us next year in Little Rock, Arkansas, Sunday, May 24 through Sunday, May 31, 2020.

Manning registration with volunteers Sarah Warhaftig (left) of Austin, Texas, and AVSA former office manager Jenny Daugereau of Kyle, Texas. Photo by Tom Glembocki.

Please make sure you use our new address, 1310 IH-10 S, Suite 100, Beaumont, TX 77707.

We have had trouble receiving mail at the new office. Please make sure you use our new address, 1310 IH-10 S, Suite 100, Beaumont, TX 77707. If you placed an order or sent in a renewal and your payment has not cleared, please contact me at the office.

We now have our 2019 AVSA calendars on sale for 50 percent off. They are $7.50 and can be found in our website store: http://avsa.org/store-calendars. The new 2020 AVSA calendar also is available.

Please make sure your membership information is up to date to ensure delivery of your magazine and any other important notices from the office. Affiliates now can update their information on our website and enter their club's event information. You can make changes here: http://avsa.org/regions.

I hope you all have a great summer and I hope to see you next year in Little Rock!

2018 Best *African Violet Magazine* Publications Awards: Applause!

By Carolee Carter, Publications Chair

Email: caroleeviolets@gmail.com

There were so many wonderful articles published in *African Violet Magazine* last year, including the Contest Entry articles, which will be awarded separately. This is the last year in which we will promote the Best Articles awards. In the coming year, the article contest will select a best winner for each issue and top winners for the year.

Here are the top six winners of the *AVM* Best Articles who will receive the President's Citation Award:

- The **Best Article** for 2018 goes to Dr. Jeff Smith for "What Do Hybridizers See?" published in the November-December issue, page 24.

- **2nd Best Article** goes to Joyce Stork for "New Mexico Student Growers Take Violets Seriously," published in the July-August issue, page 34.

- These two contributors received the same number of votes for **3rd Best Article**: Wayne Geeslin for his article "If I Can Make a Huge Comeback, So Can You!" published in the January-February issue, page 23; and Pat Hancock for her article "Judging–By the Book," published in the January-February issue, page 46.

- Two writers received the same number of votes for **4th Best Article**: Dr. Minh Bui for his article "Growing for Green," published in the January-February issue, page 34; and Cindy Nofziger for her article "Let's Support AVSA Commercial Members," published in the September-October issue, page 17.

- The **Silver Pen Award** is given to anyone who has received five or more President's Citation Certificates for articles published in the *AVM*. The recipients of this award will be presented with a written certificate, as well as a silver pen. And this year, we have two recipients for this award!

Pat Hancock is a second-time winner of the Silver Pen Award with the following President's Citation Certificates to her credit:

Awarded in:
1993 – "Two Ways to Propagate Chimeras" (January-February 1993, page 38, voted 4th Best Article)

1997 – "Create Your Own Beautiful Violets from Seeds" (July-August 1996, page 30, voted 4th Best Article)

2005 – "Variegated African Violets" (January-February 2004, page 50, voted Best Article)

2008 – "Growing Show Plants That Win" (January-February 2007, page 42, voted 4th Best Article)

2010 – "A Club Learns to 'Grow for Show'" (November-December 2009, page 28, voted Best Article)

2013 – "Don't Lose Your Crown" (March-April 2012, page 11, voted 4th Best Article & received a Silver Pen Award for five Best Articles between 1993-2010)

2014 – "Make Your AV Club Grow . . . Teach, Teach, Teach" (November-December 2013, page 42, voted 3rd Best Article)

2015 – "Grooming as You Grow – From Birth to Show" March-April 2014, page 48, voted 2nd Best Article)

2019 – Judging – By the Book" (January-February 2018, page 46, voted 3rd Best Article)

Dr. Jeff Smith is also a recipient this year of a Silver Pen Award, with the following President's Citation Certificates earned:

Awarded In:
1990 – "Yellow Fever Continues" (January-February 1990, page 43, voted 2nd Best Article)

1994 – "Those Fascinating Fantasies" (July-August 1993, page 41, voted 2nd Best Article)

1997 – "Observations on Growing & Breeding the Yellows" (January-February1996, page 36, voted Best Article)

2002 – "The Evolution of African Violets" (November-December 2001, page 42, voted 2nd Best Article)

2004 – "Thank Goodness for Sports" (January-February 2003, page 41, voted 5th Best Article)

2005 – "Mather No. 21 – A New Species Clone" (January-February 2004, page 40, voted 5th Best Article and received a Silver Pen Award for articles between 1990-2004)

2008 – "How Many Species Are There? Changes in the Taxonomy of Genus *Saintpaulia*" (November-December 2007, page 42, voted Best Article)

2019 – "What Do Hybridizers See?" (November-December 2018, page 24, voted Best Article)

We appreciate all the effort that our writers contribute to making *African Violet Magazine* such a wonderful publication. Whether you are a columnist, a seasoned writer, or simply new to growing and wanting to share your experiences, I urge all of you to write a Contest Entry article for the magazine this year. Sharing is everything! The new contest should be enticing to everyone because of the amazing prizes entrants can win.

We appreciate all the effort that our writers contribute to making *African Violet Magazine* such a wonderful publication.

Editor's note: Congratulations to all Publications Award winners. For more information on the 2019 to 2020 Article Contest, see below.

Carolee Carter presents Joyce Stork her award for the 2nd Best Article for the 2018 Publications Awards (left) and Dr. Minh Bui with an Honorable Mention award (right). Photos by Neil Lipson.

2019 Article Contest Winners

By Pat Hancock Middletown, Ohio

Congratulations to the 2019 AVM Article Contest winners! The committee was thrilled to receive so many excellent entries. Sue Hoffman, chair of the judging panel, announced the winners at the Annual Convention's Saturday night banquet:

1st Place: Bill Chaney
"Insect and Pest Mites of African Violets: Know Your Enemy!"
May/June 2019

2nd Place (Tie): Karyn Cichocki
"Dirty Perlite for Growing Violet Species"
March/April 2019

2nd Place (Tie): Paul Kroll
"Preparing Leaf Cuttings the Easy Way"
November/December 2018

Honorable Mention:
•Minh Bui
"Root Mealybugs in Hot Water"
January/February 2019

•Josh McKinney
"Wick-watering Minis"
November/December 2018

•Sandi Mynatt
"True Things I've Learned from African Violets"
November/December 2018

•Elena Rogow
"Saintpaulia in Natural Light"
January/February 2019

Special thanks to Sue and her panel, which included Bob Clark, Pat Gibson, Mel Grice and Linda Sumski. We also want to thank all commercial members who donated leaves to winners.

Learn more about the current contest on the AVSA website's magazine page and below.

Enter the Article Contest

Our new article contest is off to a great start with this issue. The September/October issue winner will receive a new chimera crown. We would love to see articles on growing and propagating chimeras or stories about attending the national convention in Houston. But we welcome any helpful articles on growing, showing and hybridizing African violets.

November Issue
Start thinking about your contest entry for the November/December issue now. That gives you until September 1 to meet the deadline. And you will want to enter to win a mini or semimini! We are especially excited about receiving articles on growing minis and semiminis or how growers juggle caring for both standards and minis. Again, any topic of interest or expertise related to growing and showing African violets and gesneriads is welcome.

In addition to a prize each issue, the winners will be entered to receive one of three top prizes, including the first-place award of AVSA membership for one year and 10 Buckeye leaves!

Learn More
Go to www.avsa.org/magazine and click on Article contest, then Contest Rules and Details. Or contact the editor (editor@avsa.org).

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Jersey Girl Trail

Exhibited by: Jane Rexilius
Hybridized by: R. Kurzynski
Miniature Trailer

Honoring Our 2019 Outstanding AVSA Members

By Susan Hill, Chair, AVSA Society Awards

Honorary One-Year Memberships

Recipient: Judy Niemira

The African Violet Society of America would like to thank Judy Niemira for her outstanding leadership as Co-Convention Chair for the 2018 AVSA Convention "African Violets CAN Link US Together" in Buffalo, New York.

For her service, Judy is receiving an AVSA Honorary One-Year Membership.

Recipient: Julie Thompson

The African Violet Society of America would like to thank Julie Thompson for her outstanding leadership as Co-Convention Chair for the 2018 AVSA Convention "African Violets CAN Link US Together" in Buffalo, New York.

For her service, Julie is receiving an Honorary One-Year Membership.

Recipient: Deb Donaldson

The African Violet Society of America would like to thank Deb Donaldson for her outstanding leadership as Co-Show Chair for the 2018 AVSA Convention "African Violets CAN Link US Together" in Buffalo, New York.

For her service, Deb is receiving an Honorary One-Year Membership.

Recipient: Beverley Williams

The African Violet Society of America would like to thank Beverley Williams for her outstanding leadership as Co-Show Chair for the 2018 AVSA Convention "African Violets CAN Link US Together" in Buffalo, New York.

For her service, Beverley is receiving an Honorary One-Year Membership.

Recipient: Marge Savage

Marge is an active member of the Lone Star African Violet Council, and has served as a director and as secretary. She is a Senior AVSA Judge. Our next recipient's mother sparked Marge's interest in African violets. Later, while living in Houston, Texas, Marge would buy violets at the grocery store and develop their potential. While she was dabbling in growing her violets, she also was raising a daughter and two sons. After moving to Midland, Texas, Marge organized the West Texas African Violet Society. She served as a wonderful AVSA Awards Chairperson from 2007 to 2016.

AVSA is recognizing Marge Savage with an Honorary One-Year Membership for her nine years of service.

Recipient: Phil Wallace

Our next recipient, like many spouses in our violet hobby, has helped as needed. Phil has assisted the AVSA Library Committee and various affiliates in Texas and Oklahoma. He volunteered to help the First African Violet Society of Austin, Texas, with the first Show Entries Program (written by Joe Bruns) by learning it and teaching others. Later, he and his wife moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, and became active in the African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa, where Phil again volunteered his talents and knowledge to the group.

For years, the AVSA Library Committee created CDs and DVDs that documented AVSA national shows and presentations. These products contained excellent photography and detailed narrations of these shows and presentations. On many occasions, the committee was given video content, but no one in the volunteer group had the necessary knowledge or equipment to edit the raw footage into usable, educational and enjoyable programs. With his knowledge of film editing, Phil removed room noise and unnecessary

items, and added audio clarity and notes to enhance the presentation.

AVSA wishes to thank Phil Wallace for his service with an Honorary One-Year Membership.

Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award Recipient: Dolores Gibbs

Our next recipient joined First Austin African Violent Society (FAAVS) as it was being formed in 1964. She is a charter member and has remained a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the group, serving as president from 1989 to 1990 and for many years as treasurer, and participating on several committees. It is difficult to find a member in FAAVS who does not cite her as the reason they joined the club. She is very subtle in her enthusiasm and constantly promotes First Austin, other affiliate organizations and AVSA. Dolores is excellent at mentoring and encouraging new members, whether she is helping them with questions about growing plants, creating container gardens, or showing them how to run a raffle table.

Dolores is a member of the Lone Star African Violet Council (LSAVC) and was president from 2010 to 2011, as well as a treasurer. She has been show chair for conventions and has served on many different committees as needed. She was the recipient of the Paula Foster Award, Wind Beneath My Wings, in 2007.

Dolores was encouraged to try judging and discovered a real joy in it. She joined the Central Texas Judges' Council and has served as an officer. She became a judge in 1987 and now is a Master Judge. She has participated in local and state affiliates and in our national AVSA shows, winning many awards for her African violets and gesneriads, and for her wonderful container gardens. She has won Best Design in Show many times. She loves to share her knowledge and never hesitates to present programs or workshops to various affiliates or garden clubs. Dolores has written many articles for the *African Violet Magazine* and for the LSAVC newsletter.

Outgoing President Richard Nicholas presents the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award to Dolores Gibbs of San Marcos, Texas. Photo by Neil Lipson.

She remains enthusiastic in her love of all our clubs but has long pointed out that the important thing about our hobby is not the African violets, but the **people**.

AVSA wishes to recognize Dolores Gibbs with the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award.

AVSA Funding Solutions Campaign Report

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Donations received from March 2019 through May 1, 2019 Total $360

$100–$499

Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs, Waukesha, WI
Alpha AVS of Dallas, Quinlan, TX

$50–$99

Margaret Kryger, Streamwood, IL

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Belinda Thibodeaux — Patterson, LA

Cajun's Just a Dream
•(11152) 03/04/2019 •B. Thibodeaux
•Single-semidouble light pink frilled pansy/raspberry band, thin white-green edge.
•Variegated medium green, pink and cream, plain, quilted, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Cajun's Just in Time
•(11153) 03/04/2019 •B. Thibodeaux
•Single-semidouble dark purple pansy/variable thin white edge.
•Variegated medium green, pink and cream, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Cajun's Maya
•(11154) 03/04/2019 •B. Thibodeaux
•Double rose-pink frilled star/raspberry sparkle edge.
•Variegated medium green and cream, plain, serrated. •Standard.

Cajun's Pink Negligee
•(11155) 03/04/2019 •B. Thibodeaux
•Single-semidouble light pink ruffled pansy/variable thin white-green edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, plain, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Cajun's Wine Me Up
•(11156) 03/04/2019 •B. Thibodeaux
•Double dark wine star.
•Variegated dark green and cream, plain, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Steven Covolo — Springville, CA

Steffano's Azure Diamonds
•(11157) 03/21/2019 •S. Covolo
•Single-semidouble light blue pansy/darker rays and veining on tips and edges.
•Dark green, plain, quilted, serrated. •Large.

Steffano's Starry Eyes
•(11158) 03/21/2019 •S. Covolo
•Single-semidouble white large fluted star/pink eye.
•Variegated dark green, cream and pink, plain, quilted. •Standard.

Karyn Cichocki — Lafayette, NJ

Owlsee Strength
•(11159) 03/22/2019 •K. Cichocki/A. Maxwell
•Single purple sticktite pansy.
•Medium-dark green, scalloped/red back, girl foliage. •Standard.

Natalya Bulko — Saint Petersburg, Russia

Nik-Korona Rossiiskoi Imperii
•(11160) 03/28/2019 •N. Bulko
•Semidouble-double chimera burgundy large frilled star/white stripe.
•Medium green, scalloped. •Small standard.

Nik-Magiia Utra
•(11161) 03/28/2019 •N. Bulko
•Semidouble chimera rose-pink large ruffled star/white stripe, blue fantasy.
•Medium green, wavy. •Standard.

Nik-Serdtse Kaia
•(11162) 03/28/2019 •N. Bulko
•Single chimera white wavy sticktite star/green-edged blue stripe.
•Medium green, glossy, ruffled. •Standard.

Elena Lebetskaia — Vinnitsa, Ukraine

LE-Donna
•(11163) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Semidouble white large frilled star.
•Variegated medium green and white, plain. •Standard.

LE-Karnaval'naia Noch'
•(11164) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Single-semidouble purple large wavy star/white eye, pink and coral puff fantasy.
•Medium green, spooned. •Standard.

LE-Lel'
•(11165) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Semidouble light blue two-tone bell.
•Dark green, plain, pointed. •Semiminiature.

LE-Martsipanovaia Roza
•(11166) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Single-semidouble light pink wavy star/fuchsia fantasy and band, thin white edge.
•Medium green, plain. •Standard.

LE-Praga
•(11167) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Single-semidouble dark coral-pink pansy/thin fuchsia sparkle edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, scalloped, girl foliage. •Semiminiature.

LE-Pyshechka
•(11168) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Semidouble-double white star/green outer petals.
•Medium green, plain. •Semiminiature.

LE-Rozovyi Zefir
•(11169) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Double bright pink large ruffled two-tone star.
•Variegated medium green and white, quilted, ruffled, serrated. •Standard.

LE-Vega
•(11170) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Semidouble-double dark cherry-red large ruffled star.
•Dark green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

LE-Vladimir
•(11171) 03/30/2019 •E. Lebetskaia
•Semidouble-double white large frilled star/blue eye.
•Variegated medium green, white and cream, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

■ Nadezhna Berdnikova — Moscow, Russia

N-Akulina
•(11172) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Semidouble white wavy bell.
•Variegated medium green, cream and yellow, plain. •Miniature.

N-Avatar
•(11173) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Single blue sticktite bell.
•Crown variegated light green, yellow and pink, plain, pointed. •Miniature.

N-Avrora
•(11174) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Semidouble-double white and rose-pink fluted star.
•Variegated medium green, white and cream. •Miniature.

N-Marta
•(11175) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Semidouble-double white pansy/pink eye, random green outer petals.
•Crown variegated light green and yellow, quilted, plain. •Semiminiature.

N-Mlechnyi Put'
•(11176) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Single blue sticktite star/pink fantasy.
•Dark green, plain. •Miniature.

N-Moroznyi Ianvar'
•(11177) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Double white-light blue star/dark blue patches.
•Dark green, plain. •Miniature.

N-Vecherniaia Zvezda
•(11178) 03/30/2019 •N. Berdnikova
•Single-semidouble pink ruffled star/fuchsia fantasy, sparkle edge.
•Variegated dark green and pink, pointed. •Miniature.

■ Tatiana Pugacheva — Kursk, Russia

PT-Rozalin
•(11179) 03/30/2019 •T. Pugacheva
•Semidouble-double pink frilled star/thin raspberry sparkle edge.
•Dark green, quilted. •Standard.

■ Natal'ia Skorniakova — Kursk, Russia

RM-Amaliia
•(11180) 03/30/2019 •N. Skorniakova
•Single white ruffled star/cherry-red patches.
•Medium green, quilted. •Standard.

RM-Nebeznyi Iuvelir
•(11181) 03/30/2019 •N. Skorniakova
•Single-semidouble white-blush frilled pansy/blue veins, variable green edge.
•Dark green, quilted, ruffled/red back. •Standard.

RM-Prozrachnyi Okean
•(11182) 03/30/2019 •N. Skorniakova
•Single lavender frilled sticktite pansy/thin blue veins.
•Dark green, quilted. •Standard.

Svetlana Repkina — Lugansk, Ukraine

RS-B'ianka
•(11183) 03/30/2019 •S. Repkina
•Single-semidouble light pink frilled large star/variable fuchsia fantasy; fuchsia edge.
•Variegated medium green, white and pink, quilted. •Standard.

RS-Bomond
•(11184) 03/30/2019 •S. Repkina
•Double hot pink frilled large star/raspberry sparkle edge.
•Crown variegated medium green and yellow, plain.
•Standard.

RS-Freilina
•(11185) 03/30/2019 •S. Repkina
•Single white-blush large wavy frilled sticktite star/raspberry sparkle edge.
•Variegated dark green, white and pink, quilted, ruffled. •Standard.

RS-Kumir
•(11186) 03/30/2019 •S. Repkina
•Single white large frilled sticktite star/pink eye, purple streaks.
•Dark green, scalloped/red back. •Standard.

RS-Ramzes
•(11187) 03/30/2019 •S. Repkina
•Single plum large frilled sticktite star/purple band, thin white-green edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, ruffled.
•Standard.

REGISTRATION CHANGE

N-Snezhnyi Georgin
•(10776) 07/30/2015 •D. Ozherelyev/N. Berdnikova
•Change from Miniature to Semiminiature.
(Requested by hybridizer.)

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received from March through April 2019 Total $605

Geneva — $100–$499
First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas
In memory of Ray Pittman

Multicolor — $50–$99
Ron and Jan Davidson
In memory of Ray Pittman
First African Violet Society of Dallas
In memory of Ray Pittman
Mary Corondan
Anne and Richard Nicholas
In memory of Ray Pittman
Mary Corondan
In lieu of speaker's fee from Prosper Garden Club
Mary Corondan
In lieu of speaker's fee from Heritage Ranch Garden Friends

Two-Tone — $25–$49
African Violet Society of Minnesota
In memory of Ruth Bann
Lorraine Leslie
Tim Young
Oshkosh Violet Society
African Violet Club of Morris County (NJ)
In lieu of judges' fees for Paul Kroll, Mel Grice and Heidi Dillenbeck

Thumbprint — Under $25
Rena Rouse
Robert McMeel
Arlene Garvens

Hosted by the Central Arkansas African Violet Society

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In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306
Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Looking for something a little different in African violets? You might try searching the web for "chameleon" African violets. This term has shown up on a Russian website to describe an African violet with flowers that intensify in color as they age. The result is that each flower differs slightly in color depending on its specific age. Pinks become darker; reds become more intense; and in one interesting case, the flower starts out light blue and becomes red as it ages. The trait appears to occur in several colors and patterns such as thumbprint markings, fantasy markings and flowers with colored centers and wide white edges. According to Alexey Tarasov, the chameleon trait was discovered and selected as part of the Fialkovod hybrids. Many of these hybrids are named with the letters AB- and an identification number.

One of the reasons for bringing the chameleon trait to the reader's attention is that when you show plants that have the trait, judges will be confronted with a floral presentation that is not uniform in color as is typical of other African violets. Flowers that opened at the same time will have the same coloration, but flowers that are much older or newly opened will be different in color. Judges who are expecting flowers to be uniform in shade and intensity might be surprised and not appreciate that these differences in shading are normal for chameleon African violets. This is not a case where flowers are fading in color intensity with age; instead, they are becoming more intensely pigmented with age.

I have been speculating as to how the chameleon trait might work. This might be a case of a mutation in the timing of the pigment production, or in the total amount of pigment produced. Generally, flowers produce their pigment in conjunction with the flower's maturation. Once most African violet flowers are open, they produce no additional pigment. That does not seem to be the case with the chameleon African violets; they keep producing more pigment as the flower ages. Therefore, either the mechanism for timing the pigment production is off, or the control of how much total pigment is made is not working properly. In either event, more pigment is made over the life span of the flower, intensifying the color as the flower ages.

> ... any flower color trait seen in standard or miniature plants could be combined with trailing growth habit.

There are other plants with flowers that change colors as the flowers age. Some, like the shrubs in the genus *Brunfelsia*, also known as the Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow shrub, fade in color from purple, to lavender, to white as the flowers age. A large number of plants signal that pollination has been accomplished by changing color. This steers pollinators toward unpollinated flowers, improving the pollination of more flowers using fewer of the plant's resources. Most of these changes are accomplished by the fading of color in the flowers, not an intensification of the flower pigments.

In any event, the chameleon African violet appears to be something new and could become an interesting trait for hybridizers to use in their experiments. Several of the other questions in this column also are related to pigment intensity.

Q: If I want offspring with intense flower colors, should both parents have intense flower colors?

A: The observation of breeding "like with like" to produce more of the same trait in the offspring will work for flower color intensity in African violets. If you choose parents that have intense shades of colors, you should get offspring with intense shades. The colors do not have to be the same. Crossing an intense blue with an intense red should give offspring of intense blue, dark reds or perhaps even dark pinks.

In a reverse fashion, crossing pale colors with pale colors usually produces offspring with pale colors. Here again, the colors do not have to be the same. Crossing a pale blue with a pale red or pale pink should give offspring with pale blues, reds or pinks.

Q: Some of the genetic charts talk about an "intensity" gene that modifies colors. How does this gene work and how is it inherited?

A: The "intensity" gene controls the total amount of pigment produced. The gene has three forms: pale, moderate and intense. Pale and intense colors generally will breed true as described in the previous question. The gene controls the total amount of pigment produced. Think of the pale colors as being the result of very little total pigment in the flower, while the intense colors are due to high amounts of total pigment in the flower. Medium shades are the result when an intermediate amount of pigment is produced.

Since the intensity gene has incomplete dominance, it is difficult to say whether the pale form or the intense form is the dominant one. Both are expressed if present. If you cross two medium-shaded plants together, the ratio in the offspring often approaches one pale, to two medium, to one intense. Those familiar with genetics will recognize the 1:2:1 ratio as typical in cases of incomplete dominance with three genotypes or phenotypes. All the genes are expressed if present and there is not a hidden recessive gene, as in seen in many other traits.

Crossing a pale flower with an intense flower should result in all intermediate pigment, or medium-shade flower colors. The color of the flower (such as blue, red or pink) doesn't matter; it only matters how much total pigment is produced. For example, a dark pink flower crossed with a pale blue flower should give medium blues, pinks and possibly reds.

Q: Are the dominant genetic traits in African violets common, or are they rare?

A: It can be a bit confusing to use the terms genetic "dominant" and "common" in the same sentence. A genetic "dominant" is a trait that is always produced if present. However, the trait might not actually be "common" in the populations. For example, in humans, polydactyly with multiple fingers and toes is a genetic dominant trait, but the trait is relatively "rare" across human populations. In African violets, blue flower color is a genetic dominant and it also is common in the wild species violets. In domestic collections, blue flower might be rare in a collection because of the grower's personal tastes and preferences.

It is much easier for hybridizers to work with a genetic dominant trait because the trait will show in the next generation. Recessive traits tend to hide and can be difficult to express in the offspring, often skipping to the second generation. Whether a trait is common depends on selection for the trait. For example, flower dropping is a common trait in the wild species, but is rare in cultivated plants because hybridizers have selected against dropping. Genetically, flower dropping is a genetic recessive trait and stick-tight (stick-tite) flowers are dominant. So, in summary, saying a genetic dominant trait is rare or common is comparing two unrelated factors.

Q: Trailing African violets seem to lack the diversity in flowers seen in the standard or miniature plants. Is there a reason for this?

A: There is no genetic reason why the full range of flower diversity seen in the standard or miniature plants couldn't be bred into trailers. I think the reason you might find it lacking is that fewer hybridizers have worked with trailers and that trailers traditionally might not have been as popular as other African violet growth forms. Without a demand, hybridizers just have not focused as much attention on trailers. With a correct breeding program and goals, I would predict that any flower color trait seen in standard or miniature plants could be combined with trailing growth habit.

My First Violets: Just Add Water!

By Sandra Skalski

Mullica Hill, NJ • Email: sskalski@comcast.net

It sounds simple, doesn't it? All plants need water, so just pour it on. Not so fast! Overwatering is the **number one** cause of violet demise. Learn proper watering techniques and you'll be on your way to growing healthy, beautiful African violets.

African violets, (*Saintpaulia*) come from the Usambara Mountains of Tanzania. The nearly two dozen species grow in various microclimates. Some thrive in the warmer lowlands and others prefer cooler temperatures higher up on the mountain. They all have one thing in common, though: they grow in crevices or rocky rubble. African violets have shallow root systems and although the plants love humidity, they don't do well with wet feet (roots sitting in poorly draining or heavily wet soil). That's why a loose, porous potting mix is recommended for African violets. Heavy, soggy soil is sure to send them to violet heaven.

Tap Water Quality

Let's start with the water itself. Can you use the tap water right out of your faucet? A lot will depend on the quality of your tap water. At my previous residence, I could take a gallon of tap water in a clean milk jug and let it sit overnight to let any chlorine evaporate. I added a small amount of fertilizer, shook up the jug and I was set to go. When I moved to my current home, my plants suffered a serious decline after a few months. The outer leaves were yellow and the foliage was hard and brittle. Even worse, our coffee tasted terrible. I discovered that my new tap water was high in dissolved solids. If I left a bowl of water to evaporate, there would be a hard, white crust in the bottom of the bowl after a few days. We installed a reverse osmosis system and that solved the plant problem and improved our coffee!

You can find out a lot about your water by contacting your water company. They can tell you what they use for disinfection (free chlorine or chloramines?), the average levels of dissolved solids and the pH. Be aware that the pH can vary during the year, since your city might add more chlorine during the warmer months. If your water has a pH of 8.0 and above, stores specializing in aquariums or hydroponics sell chemicals you can use to lower it.

> Before you water, check the soil moisture level.

Most tap water will be fine for your plants, and if you are having success with African violets or other houseplants, don't worry. However, if you suspect your water is a problem, you have some options. If you don't have a lot of plants, you can buy jugs of spring or reverse osmosis water. Water filtration units are available that attach right to your faucet. Some people have had good results using rainwater but be aware that this might introduce other contaminants from your roof.

Hand-Watering

If you only have a few plants, you can top or bottom water your plants. Before you water, check the soil moisture level. This involves observing how the plant looks, the weight of the pot and the dampness of the soil. Are the leaves turgid and standing straight out from the center or are they a bit limp? You want to water before the leaves get limp because the fine roots might be damaged if the soil gets too dry. Put your finger into the top inch or so of soil. If it is dry to the touch, the plant needs water. Or pick up the pot. Does it feel lighter than normal? You will develop a feel for the weight of the pot that will tip you off when water is needed.

If your plants need water, you can pour the water in a saucer or on the soil, being careful not to get water on the leaves. Use a tissue to soak up any water spilled on the leaves to prevent spotting. Whether you water from the top or the bottom, be sure to pour off any water that hasn't been soaked up after about an hour.

If you have many plants or if you don't have the time to individually water your plants, there are several "automated" methods you can use to keep your violets watered.

Wick Watering

Wick watering takes advantage of capillary action to water your plants for you. You insert a length of absorbent material, the wick, about halfway into the pot. The loose end hangs into a reservoir. The reservoir contains your water/fertilizer mix. The bottom of the pot should not contact the water in the reservoir or the potting mix will absorb too much water. The most common way to wick water involves a single plant on a single reservoir. You can make a reservoir from recycled glass jars, deli containers or disposable food storage containers. Just cut a hole in the plastic lid and let the wick hang through it. Synthetic yarn makes good cheap wicks that you can cut to any size. You also can cut strips of old pantyhose. Just be sure to use synthetic material because natural materials like cotton will rot away.

Happy African violets wick watering with individual reservoirs.

Some people wick water with a community reservoir. You can use egg crating over a water-filled tray for this. Although a community reservoir offers the convenience of having to fill only one reservoir instead of many, there is a significant downside. Pests like soil mealybugs, along with some fungi (*Phytophthora* and *Rhizoctonia*), can spread from one plant to all of the others on the same community watering system.

Mat Watering

Mat watering is similar to wick watering. Plants are placed on an absorbent mat. You can place pots directly on the mat, but some people use wicks in those pots to ensure contact with the mat. As with the wick, the mat material needs to be synthetic. Old or cheap blankets can be cut to make mats or you can purchase a couple of yards of synthetic fabric. The ends of the mat can hang into a water reservoir filled with your water-fertilizer solution, or you can add water to the trays on a regular schedule.

These violets sit on a fabric mat that soaks water from a large reservoir. Photo credit: Ray Burnside.

Adjusting Soil and Correcting Problems

If you wick or mat water your plants, it is very important to use a potting mix that contains a lot of perlite. If you buy your potting mix, look for words such as "wicking mix" as an indication that the mix is suitable for this type of watering. You can make your own wicking mix by adding extra perlite to regular African violet potting soil. Wicking mixes typically contain about 60 percent perlite.

What do you do if you've overwatered or underwatered your plant? If the plant is very limp, don't try to overcompensate and heavily soak the soil. The fine roots might be damaged and cannot absorb the water right away. Add water a little at a time until the plant recovers. If it seems pretty far gone (leaves are dried up), try placing the plant in a plastic bag. The extra humidity might help it recover.

If the plant is limp and the soil is very wet, you might have overwatered. Place the plant on a wad of paper towels and folded newspapers to help soak up the extra water.

You can find out a lot about your water by contacting your water company.

That wasn't so hard, right? Once you know the basics of proper watering, you are well on your way to growing beautiful African violets. Happy growing!

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

By Susan Hapner St. Louis, Missouri

Donations received from March 1, 2019 through April 30, 2019 Total: $655

Geneva — $100-$499
Evelyn J. Boyer

Multicolor — $50-$99
John Novak
P. Knight
In lieu of speakers' fee for Pat Knight and LaDonna Hopson
Judges Council of Minnesota
In memory of Ruth Bann

Two-Tone — $25-$49
Florence Collins
Lyndell Fong
Billings Bloomers/MT
In memory of Doreen Connolly

Thumbprint — Under $25
AVC of Morris County
In lieu of judge's fee for David Tooker
Florence Collins

Thumbprint
Kathleen Dupree
Debra Foster
Margaret Krygier
Robert McMeel
Metro St. Louis AV Council
Lois Poplin
Sunny Redmond
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Margaret Rickson
Rena Rouse
Helen Schafer
Carol Semrau
Carol Sharits
Elizabeth Tallman
Josane Wagner
Martin S. Wright

Greek Yogurt Cups Make Perfect Pots

By Pat Hancock Middletown, Ohio

If you like Greek yogurt, you can repurpose the containers for the perfect 3 1/2-inch pot. I first was given some of these pots to try by Andrea Worrell. The ones I am using are Chobani Greek brand. They are 3 1/2 inches in diameter and 2 1/2 inches tall. They have a 1/4-inch lip. A regular 3 1/2-inch pot is 3 inches tall and does not have a lip (see Figure 1). Remember, violets have shallow roots. These yogurt containers are almost the same height as a Solo cup and you can mold-pot plants from a solo cup into them. Here are the steps:

Figure 1: Yogurt container (left) and typical 3 1/2-inch pot (right).

First, you must remove the outside plastic label (see Figures 2 and 3). I use a pointed knife tip and start at the top. They come off quite easily. Next, I use my small soldering iron to punch a hole in the center and three holes around the outside edge (Figure 4). If you eat a lot of yogurt, you can write on the pots and throw them away when you move a plant up and mold-pot it into a 4- or 5-inch pot (see Figure 5). I prefer to use a strip of painter's tape on the side so that I can reuse the containers. I love using these Greek yogurt pots. Try them. You'll like them.

Editor's note: Thanks to Rei Somlai for all photos in this article.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

A Family Portrait: *Pachycaulos nummularia*

By Paul Kroll

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Email: pfkroll@me.com

My choice for this column is an opportunity for me to rejoice. I have tried so many times to grow this plant with varying degrees of success. I would obtain a start and it would grow awhile and die. Other times, it would perish almost immediately. Three years ago, at the Gesneriad Society convention, I obtained yet another start. (There is a fine line between dedication and stupidity!) This time, the plant continued to grow, quite successfully. I am still in shock.

Caring for *Pachycaulos nummularia*

I always have tried growing this plant under a protective dome rather than "out" on the shelf. I continue to grow it that way. I also would exhibit the plant in a domed container. *P. nummularia* really prefers high humidity to thrive. My plant's dome sits at the edge of a shelf with four T8 bulbs overhead. My soil mix is an altered Fisher's Mix that contains some soil and some added milled sphagnum moss. I saucer-water and do not wick anything I grow.

Side view of *P. nummularia* bloom on plant grown by Dale Martens. Photo by Dale Martens.

I recently have torn apart a rather large *P. nummularia* by taking tip cuttings and rooting them. The older growth tends to get slightly "woody," so tip cuttings are best. I always strive to take cuttings (of any vining plant) so that there are two nodes to put below the soil line and two nodes above. After the cuttings are well rooted, they can be pinched to encourage branching.

Front view of *P. nummularia* bloom on plant grown by Dale Martens. Photo by Dale Martens.

Plant Characteristics

The blooms are a bright orange-red in color and are pouch shaped, with a tiny opening. This suggests they attract pollinators such as hummingbirds or some type of small insect that can make its way into those small openings. Thus far, my plant seems to always have a few blooms open, but not a flush of bloom at any one time.

P. nummularia is quite shallow rooted. I start several cuttings in a 5-inch tub and put a layer of coarse perlite on the bottom of the pot to ensure good drainage. Finally, I have achieved success in growing and blooming this plant! You might do the same. Try *P. nummularia*!

Photo Credit: Dale Martens

Pachycaulos nummularia

Exhibited by: Dale Martens

Successful Wick Watering

By Dale Martens Sherrard, Illinois

Email: dalemartens@mchsi.com

The reason I began using wick reservoirs for my gesneriads, including my African violets, was because we were moving from Texas to Illinois. We made three trips in an eBay-purchased moving truck and took about three months to move. That meant I had around 300 plants on stands in Texas that would be abandoned for nearly 4 weeks at a time. I was smart enough to set up the reservoirs about six months before the move to make sure the wick method was working. During that time, I learned much about how to successfully wick.

My growing stand with all my *Streptocarpus* on wick reservoirs.

Reservoirs

A reservoir is a container that holds water and has two holes cut in the lid. One hole is for adding water and the other is for the wick, although I've been known to place two pots per reservoir. I purchased reservoirs with lids from Cape Cod Violetry, but I also have made my own out of recycled plastic ice cream containers, margarine tubs and larger deli containers.

The reservoirs do not have to be round. In fact, square containers often can hold two medium-sized pots.

The wick runs through a hole into the reservoir.

The average reservoir (pint or quart) is 3 inches tall. I alternate a variety of balanced or higher nitrogen orchid fertilizers at the rate of one-eighth teaspoon per gallon of water.

Wicking Material

Wicks need to be acrylic or nylon (never cotton) so the wick does not rot. I cut about 8 inches in length for Solo cups or 3-inch pots and 11 inches for a 4- to 6-inch pot. I use very wet wicks that have been soaking

I vary number of strands based on pot size.

in water into which I added a drop of gentle, liquid dish soap (not anti-bacterial or bleach). The soap helps the wick stay wet. I purchase the cheapest acrylic yarn that is 4-ply, meaning there are four strands twisted together.

The photo on the previous page shows how many strands I use depending on the size of the pot. If all four plies in the yarn are used for a Solo cup, the soil tends to stay too wet and root rot can kill the plant. Some growers have found that lighter colors of acrylic yarn, like white, pink and light blue, hold water better than darker colors such as navy, brown and black.

Soil

I find that the soil used for the wick method must be very light so the roots are not soaking wet. I use a variety of commercial soils and I mix one part of commercial soil that already contains perlite with one part perlite. That means my mix is about 60 percent perlite. I put one-half inch of moist perlite in the bottom of the pot. That way, if I overfill the reservoir, the perlite helps to keep the soil from oversoaking.

The wick comes up through wet perlite.

I make sure the wick touches the bottom of the reservoir and the rest of the wick circles up through the pot, with the tip placed under at least one-half inch of soil at the top of the pot. Don't allow the wick to be exposed to air at the top of the pot. Place the newly potted plant on the lid of the reservoir with the wet wick hanging into the reservoir. Add enough water so that it overflows a bit and the lid is wet. This begins the wicking action. Check on the pot in a week to make sure it is wicking. I do not allow the reservoirs to dry completely; I add water while there is still an inch of water left in the reservoir. Otherwise, the wick might dry too much.

I circle the wick an inch below the top of the pot and add one-half inch of soil on top of the wick.

Leaching

Algae can form in the reservoirs. I have tried a variety of products to slow that down or prevent it, but found the plants did not grow as well. Now I do nothing to prevent it, and in fact, I've found algae water is the perfect environment to promote roots on cuttings placed into the reservoir holes.

Plastic bags are part of my wick reservoir supplies.

For two months, I add water without emptying the reservoir. After two months, I remove the plant and leach the soil with clear water to remove the buildup of fertilizer salts in the soil. I pour about 2 cups of room temperature water through the pot and let it drain. I like Dyna-Gro Foliage Pro 9-3-6 mixed at one-eighth teaspoon per gallon of water. After leaching, I pour about one-half cup of the Dyna-Gro water through the

pot and let it drain. That way, there is some fertilizer in the soil as the plant starts the process once again of drinking through its wick.

Diapers

In Texas, I washed my reservoirs and lids with bleach. In Illinois, we had a septic tank and needed to avoid using products with bleach. So now, what? I found the perfect plastic, twist-tie Hefty sandwich baggie to line my reservoirs. When it is time to leach, I dump the algae water and throw away the baggie. I only need to clean the lid with hot water and soap. The best baggie size for me is 6 3/4-wide x 8 inches tall for pint-sized reservoirs and gallon baggies for quart-size or larger reservoirs. Put the baggie in the reservoir, and then add water to within an inch of the top of the reservoir. Fold down the side of the baggie around the top of the reservoir. Add more water. Put the lid on. I call these baggies "diapers."

I learned from our adventure in moving that all buds and flower stems need to be removed before leaving the plants alone, because plants drink quite a bit when producing flowers. That disbudding for 3 months during the move, especially with the *Streptocarpus*, had a fantastic result. My *Streptocarpus* produced more leaves — and more leaves means more flowers!

This Heinz's Harbour Lights sure responds to wick watering!

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Karen Broadway Glendale, Arizona

Donations received from March 1, 2019 through April 30, 2019 Total $230

Multicolor — $50-$99
Levin Tilghman, Philadelphia, PA

Two-Tone — $25-$49
Mrs. Grace W. Bailey, Virginia Beach, VA
Stephanie DeLuse, Tempe, AZ

Thumbprint — Under $25
Karen Broadway, Glendale, AZ
Albert Dodson, Lancaster, PA
Joe Durnell, St. Louis, MO
Barbara Kirby, St. John, IN
Robert McMeel, Houma, LA
Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council, St. Louis, MO
Oshkosh Violet Society, Oshkosh, WI
Lois Poplin, Savannah, GA
Evelyn Quinn, Wall, NJ
Rena Rouse, Auburn, NY
JoAnne Schrimsher, Jo's Violets, Victoria, TX
Lynn Wallach, Hollywood, FL

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Sinningia tuberosa

Exhibited by: Dr. William E.H. Price
Judges Special Award, AVSA, 2019

Coming Events

September 14-15 — California
Delta Gesneriad and African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Sacramento Garden and Art Center
3330 McKinley Blvd.
Sacramento, CA
Saturday: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Open to public, free admission

September 14 — Georgia
The African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta
Show and Plant Sale
North Decatur United Methodist Church
1523 Church Street
Decatur, GA
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sue Myers: 630-319-3155
Or message Facebook page:
The African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta

September 21 — Colorado
Rocky Mountain African Violet Council
Tagawa Gardens
7711 So. Parker Rd.
Centennial, CO
Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Trudy Brekel: 303-452-9015
love4violets@yahoo.com

September 21-22 — Minnesota
North Star African Violet Council
AVSA Judged Show and Plant Sale
Bachman's Floral, Gift & Garden
6010 Lyndale Ave. S.
Heritage Room
Minneapolis, MN
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m. -3 p.m.
Mary Kealy-Falk: mkealyfalk@aol.com
Club email: NSAVCTC@gmail.com

September 27-28 — Missouri
Heart of America Gesneriad Society
Judged Show and Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
5200 Pennsylvania Ave
Kansas City, MO
Friday: 1-4 p.m. (plant sale only)
Saturday: 9 a.m-3 p.m. (show and sale)
Carol Brown: 618-210-5573
carol81843@yahoo.com

September 27-28 — Ohio
Ohio State African Violet Society
Annual Convention, Show and Sale
Kingwood Center Gardens
50 Trimble Rd., Mansfield, Ohio
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sales); 1-5 p.m. (show)
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (show and sale)
Free to public, fee for Kingwood Center admission
Mel Grice: 937-654-7014
melsgrice@earthlink.net
www.osavs.org

October 4 — Nebraska
Missouri Valley African Violet Council
Show, Sale and Judging School
Ramada Plaza, 3321 S. 72nd St.
Omaha, NE
Friday: Judging School, 8 a.m.-finish; noon-4 p.m. (show and sale)
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (show and sale)
Randy G. Deutsch: 605-321-0717
rcjsch@prodigy.net
www.MVAVC.org

October 5 — Pennsylvania
African Violet Society of Philadelphia
Annual Judged Show and Plant Sale
Cathedral Village Retirement Community
600 E Cathedral Rd.
Philadelphia, PA
Saturday: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Admission free.
610-272-6961 or www.phillyviolets.org

October 5 — Washington
Saintpaulia Society of Tacoma
64th Annual Show and Sale
Watson's Nursery, 6211 Pioneer Way East
Puyallup, WA
9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (sale); 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (show)
Cathleen Graves: 253-535-5973
rhythmslave@harbornet.com

October 18-19 — Minnesota
African Violet Society of Minnesota
African Violet Display and Sale
Northtown Mall, 398 Northtown Dr. NE
Blaine, MN
Friday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Jude Neumann: 651-433-2708
Kathy Lahti: 320-274-1157
http://sites.google.com/site/avsminnesota

October 26 — Missouri
African Violet Club of Greater Kansas City
Show and Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
51st and Wornall
Kansas City, MO
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Lynn Canning: lcanning@sbcglobal.net

AVSA Booster Fund

By Dianna Walston Kokomo, Indiana

Donations received from February 26 through April 17, 2019 Total: $554

Geneva — $100-$499
David Kesler, Tyler, TX
Proceeds from FC Viewer

Multicolor — $50-$99
Joyce K. Groh, Lebanon, PA

Two-Tone — $25-$49
Mrs. Grace W. Bailer, Virginia Beach, VA
Kevin Degner, Oshkosh, WI
Oshkosh Violet Society
Sharon Hair, Omaha, NE
Ginny Heatter, Hackettstown, NJ
AVC of Morris County

Thumbprint — Under $25
Adrienne Clagett, Nashville, TN
Barbara Dickisson, Morristown, NJ

Thumbprint (continued)
Albert Dodson, Lancaster, PA
Robert McMeel, Houma, LA
Martha A. Morgan, Thonotosassa, FL
Rosemary Nesta, Broomfield, CO
Lois Poplin, Savanna, GA
Suzanne E. Rasich, Plano, IL
Nancy Relihan, Lagrange, GA
Rena Rouse, Auburn, NY
James Schade, Bedford, OH
Carol Semrau, Anoka, MN
Carol Sharits, Chicago, IL
Linda Sumski, St. Louis, MO
Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council
Elizabeth Tan, Skillman, NJ

And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVC of Morris County, NJ – Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Ness' Candy Pink, Jersey Blue Moonlight; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jersey Sugar Plums, Jolly Pepper, Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Best in Show/Best Standard: Jersey Snow Flakes; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Pepper; Best Miniature: Shirl's Hawaiian Lei; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bob Kurzynski.**
•Best Species Collection: S. 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker, S. 5i clone *velutinus* lite, S. 5i clone *velutinus* Amazon; Best Trailer: Jersey Starlight Trail; Best Species: S. 5i clone *velutinus* Amazon, Best Gesneriad: *Primulina medica*, Design Sweepstakes, **Karyn Cichocki.**
•Best Design, **Jill Fischer.**

AVS of Greater Tulsa, OK – Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Love's Caress, Buckeye Nostalgia, Cajun's Roses Anyone; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Argyle Socks, Rob's Dodo Bird, Jolly John; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Love's Caress; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Frills; Best Miniature: Petite Blarney; Best Trailer: RS-Klad; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol Rice.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Vertigo', **Patricia Daniel.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Judith Carter.**

AVS of Minnesota, MN – Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Inspiration Pink, Harbor Blue, Jersey Snow Flakes, **Jude Neumann.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Crystal, Optimara Little Pearl, Optimara Rose Quartz; Best Species Collection: S. 5i clone *velutinus*, S. *ionanthus* subsp. *grotei*, S. *ionanthus* subsp. *orbicularis*; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Little Blue Bandit; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Star; Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail; Best Species: S. 5i clone *velutinus*; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Heartland's White Gold'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kathy Lahti.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Ruby, Petite Blarney, Precious Red, **Patricia Kono.**
•Best Standard: Cajun's Roses Anyone, **Carol Semrau.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Werness.**

Central California AVS, CA – Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Smooch Me, EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia, Buckeye Picotee Sweetheart; Best in Show/Best Standard: Smooch Me; Best Semiminiature: Optimara Little Hopi II; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Steffano's Double Take', **Stephen Covolo.**
•Best Species: S. *ionanthus* subsp. *ionanthus* var. *ionanthus*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Mary Thompson.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Renee Wilson.**

Central Florida AVS, FL – Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Carolina Elegant Affair, Buckeye Nostalgia, Tiger's Son; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Ottawa, Rob's Antique Rose, Jolly Fire; Best Species Collection: S. clone *ionanthus*, S. clone Cha Simba, S. clone House of Amani; Best in Show/Best Standard: Carolina Elegant Affair; Best Miniature: Orchard's Wonder Twin; Best Trailer: Rob's Vanilla Trail; Best Semiminiature: Optimara Little Ottawa; Best Species: S. clone *ionanthus*; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Sylvia'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Elvie Blakely.**

Cincinnati AVS/AVS of Dayton, OH – Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Coujon, Cajun's Fair Maiden, Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress, **Debbie McInnis.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Mac's Misty Meadow, Jolly Devil, Jolly Butterfly; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Devil; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Falling Stars', **Terri Vicenzi.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Fairy, Rob's Dandy Lion, Dean's Bunny Blue; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Shirley Jones.**

•Best Standard: Buckeye Calico; Best Trailer: Jersey Rose Trail; Best Species: S. 6 clone *brevipilosa* No. 10, **Vicki Ferguson.**
•Best Design, **Mel Grice.**

Evening AVC of Des Moines, IA – Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Fascinating Fury, Frozen in Time, Cajun's Fair Maiden; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Playgirl, Irish Flirt, Jolly Butterfly; Best Standard: Frozen in Time; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Randy McMahill.**
•Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Lyon's June Bug;
•Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Water Bug', **Lenaiya Vetter.**
•Best Design, **Mary Jane Paez.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Linda Breakwell.**

Heart of Jacksonville AVS, FL – Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Roses Anyone, K's Dancing Spree, Marching Band, **Carol McBride.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Boondoggle, Blue Silhouette, Kid Karla, **Sharon Gartner.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cajun's Lil Sprinkles, Shirl's Senior Moment, Swing Kid; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Loupy Lou; Best Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Semiminiature: Cajun's Lil Sprinkles; Best Trailer: Sport of Pacific Pearl; Best Design, **Linda McQueen.**
•Best Species, S. 3 clone *shumensis*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bobbi Johannsen.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Suomi', **Janice Holinyj.**

Omaha AV and Gesneriad Society – Winners:

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Precious Red, Persian Prince; Best Miniature: Persian Price; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Randy Deutsch.**
•Best in Show/Best Standard: Hunter's Rut Crazed, **Tony Freeland.**
•Best Semiminiature: Imp's Pink Eye, **Linda Hall.**
•Best Trailer: Pixie Blue, **Scott Evans.**

Richmond AVS, VA – Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Clementine, Harbor Blue, Jersey Snow Flakes; Best Standard: Newtown Quiet Resolve; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Butterfly; Best Species: S. 5h clone *rupicolus*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barbara Greenawalt.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Azurite, Mac's Just Jeff, Mac's Kismet's Knight; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Pixie Blue; Best Miniature: Mac's Just Jeff; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Polar Canary', **Kathryn Hedgepeth.**
•Best Design, **Sharon Long.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Stewart.**

Rocky Mountain AV Council, CO – Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Alliance, Picasso, Buckeye Petty Larceny; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Satin Rose, Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Rob's Boogie Woogie; Best Standard: Picasso; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Species: S. 5b clone *confusa*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Susan Shaw.**
•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Taffeta Blue, Buckeye Nostalgia, Cajun's Ma Cher Amie; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Texan; Design Sweepstakes, **Deb Carnevale.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Butterfly, Jolly Dazzler, Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Very Berry', **Trudy Brekel.**
•Best Species Collection: S. 5c1 clone Sigi Falls, S. *ionanthus* subsp. *ionanthus* var. *ionanthus*, S. 5g clone *pendulus* var. *kizarae*, **Kathrey Howard Maynard.**
Best Design, **Melissa Shopnitz.**

Sho-Me AVC, MO – Winners:

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cajun's Alfie, Sister Sylvia, Little Pro; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Best Standard: Buckeye Nostalgia, Imp's Fairy Berry; Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lynn Canning.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Morgan's Declan Duff, Optimara Little Tourmaline, Optimara Rose Quartz; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Finella'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Linda Hall.**
•Best Species: S. 5b clone *confusa*, **Helen Gieselman.**

Tucson AVS, AZ – Winners:

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly John, Jolly Glory, Jolly Jan; Best Species: S. 5b clone *confusa*, **Judy Millstone.**
•Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Andrea; Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Judy Soop.**
•Best Standard: Optimara EverLove, **Sheila Wood.**
•Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Kathy Bell.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Panther'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Michele Juvé.**

Windsor AVS, CT – Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Miss Lily, Sweet Tea, Lyon's Pirate's Treasure; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Sister Sylvia,

Sassy Sister; Best Standard: LE-Posledneye Dykhaniy; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Miniature: Roller Rink; Best Species: S. *ionanthus* subsp. *grandifolius*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Debra Vallides.**
•Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Galiwinku; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Falling Stars'; Design Sweepstakes, **Cindy Fagan.**
•Best Design, **Ruth Hoffman.**

Correction – March/April 2019 AVM
Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs, WI – Winners:
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Lucky Lady Bug, Rob's Scrumptious, Rob's Inner Orbit, **Jay VandeBerg.**
•Best Design, **Randy Buske.**

2019 Annual Convention Awards, Houston, Texas

The 73rd Annual Convention and Show awards were announced in Houston on May 30. Here's a partial list of some of the awards from among more than 600 entries. For a complete list, see the AVSA website (www.avsa.org/2019awards) and the September/October issue of *AVM*. Congratulations to all winners!

Best African Violet in Show
Buckeye Nostalgia
Wayne Geeslin, Sugar Land, TX

2nd Best African Violet in Show
Cajun's Lil Forever Blue
Mary Corondan, McKinney, TX

3rd Best African Violet in Show
Jazz Bouquet
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Best AVSA Standard Collection
Cajun's Freckleface Kid, Mary Craig, Cajun's Beautiful Oblivion
Wayne Geeslin, Sugar Land, TX

2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection
Cajun's Coujon, Cajun's Mystical Star, RS-Bomond
Belinda Thibodeaux, Patterson, LA

Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection
Jersey Sugar Plums, Jolly Frills, Jazz Bouquet
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection
Rob's Boolaroo, Rob's Galiwinku, Rob's Humpty Doo
Sue Melson, de Soto, MO

Best Design in Show
"In a Nutshell"
Anne Nicholas, Denton, TX

Best African Violet in Show — Commercial
RS-Zimniy Tsvetok
Paul Sorano, Dolgeville, NY

2nd Best African Violet in Show — Commercial
Jersey Snow Flakes
Kathy Hajner, Peralta, NM

3rd Best African Violet in Show — Commercial
Rob's Lucky Snowflake
The Violet Barn, Naples, NY

Best New Cultivar — Commercial
19-102
Kathy Hajner, Peralta, NM

2nd Best New Cultivar — Commercial
Rob's Lucky Snowflake
The Violet Barn, Naples, NY

3rd Best New Cultivar — Commercial
19-101
Kathy Hajner, Peralta, NM

2019 Convention Awards

One of these carefully packed boxes contains the Best in Show winner exhibited by Wayne Geeslin (right) and hybridized by Pat Hancock (forward). Also pictured: Pat's niece, Teri Wills, and Kurt Jablonski. Photo by Teresa Odle.

Wayne Geeslin holds his Best in Show Buckeye Nostalgia. Photo by Tom Glembocki.

Paul Sorano of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses accepts from Richard Nicholas his award for Best in Show, Commercial for RS-Zimniy Tsvetok. Photo by Neil Lipson.

Anne Nicholas, Convention Chair, was really excited to win Best Design in Show for "In a Nutshell." Photo by Tom Glembocki.

Contest Entry —

Hooked on Trailers

By Kitty Hedgepeth Richmond, Virginia

I am a long-time resident of Richmond, Virginia, and have been a member of the Richmond African Violet Society since fall 1991. Wow! Has it been that long? I joined AVSA around the same time that I began my great African violet adventure. I am also a charter member of the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society and a member of the National Capitol Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society. I am an AVSA Senior Judge, just one more test away from becoming a Master Judge (fingers crossed).

Getting to Know African Violets

I became interested in African violets when my next-door neighbor called me over to the backyard fence to see the "fancy" African violet that she had purchased at the local violet club's show at the mall. I was impressed. I had never seen an African violet with foliage like that and thought I would like one for myself. Long story short, I found out that the "fancy" African violet actually was an *Episcia*.

I spent a bit of time talking to one of the club members, filled out an application and went home with an actual "fancy" African violet. It was Tomahawk. I had never seen an African violet with red blossoms before! This was not the garden variety violet that I was used to seeing at my local garden center and grocery store.

To backtrack a little, when I got my first apartment, my mother would give me African violets every now and then to brighten things up. I would put them in a huge pot to give them plenty of room to grow, stick them in the sunniest window I had available and would water them mercilessly. They didn't last long. Wash, rinse, repeat. She would give me another violet and I would repeat my intensive care routine until they died a mushy death. Love hurts.

After a few months of belonging to the Richmond African Violet Society, I got the message and began keeping my violets alive. They not only were alive, but actually thriving. Encouraged, I bought my first light stand, a two-tray tabletop stand that I immediately filled with more and more plants. The rest is, as they say, history.

This Pixie Blue won Best in Show, Best Trailer and Best Vintage plant in the 2019 Richmond AVS show.

Introduction to Trailers

Over time, I learned that not only are there red African violets, but also multicolored, fantasies, miniatures, semiminiatures and trailing African violets. My goodness, trailers! More crowns are better! After at-tempting to enter an Optimara Rose Quartz into our local show that had suckered to the point that it was unrecognizable as a single-crowned plant (I was so proud of my trailer), I learned that there are African violets that are actually hybridized to grow that way, with multiple crowns. Someone gave me a Rob's Lilli Pilli and I was hooked.

Most of the public has never seen a trailing African violet outside of an African violet show. Unfortunately, most garden centers and other venues that sell African violets to the general public carry only standard plants with the occasional semiminiature in

the mix. People are amazed by the size of the plants and the quantity of blooms exhibited by a multi-crowned show plant. I think if more trailing varieties were available to the general public, more people would choose to grow them along with or in lieu of single-crowned standard plants.

Caring for Trailers

To me, trailing African violets are no more difficult to grow than single-crowned varieties. The main difference is in the grooming. I have found that if you want to grow a trailing specimen that is good for show, it is important to remove oversized and damaged leaves as they occur to create consistency in the size of the foliage. I also have found that to create good form, it is advisable to remove stray crowns that want to zig when the rest of the plant is zagging.

Some trailers have a more trailing habit than others that tend to grow into a mound or pillow shape. Some of the rambling varieties can become a little leggy and begin to creep outside of the pot. Don't be shy. Although it might seem counterintuitive, remove those trailing crowns that have gone rogue and pot them up separately. With time, the parent plant will fill in with new crowns and become a more compact plant with better form and a better chance of being a candidate for show.

Since my growing space is small, I have learned to limit my collection. I enjoy growing African violet species, many of which are trailing and vintage plants. Most of the trailers that I grow are vintage, being hybrids that are 25 years old or older. I love Pixie Blue and Pixie Pink, Tiny Wood Trail and all of the Rob's hybrid trailers.

A close-up of the fantasy blossoms on Rob's Boolaroo.

I also grow a few of the Senk's hybrids. They are so unusual and I cannot resist that longifolia foliage. Two of my favorites are Senk's Try the Decaf and Senk's Snowy Egret. I like to throw a little strange into the mix!

By the time this article is published, the AVSA Convention in Houston will be a fond memory. I am attending and am excited about looking for new varieties of trailing African violets to add to my collection.

JOIN TODAY!

The African Violet Society of America

1310 IH-10 S, Suite 100
Beaumont, Texas 77707
(409) 839-4725
http://avsa.org
Write or call today for information

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Cajun's Mystical Star

Exhibited by: Belinda Thibodeaux
Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux
Standard
From the 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection, 2019

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

RS-Bomond

Exhibited by: Belinda Thibodeaux
Hybridized by: S. Repkina
Standard
From the 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection, 2019

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Jersey Sugar Plums

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: R. Kurzynski
Semiminiature
From the Best AVSA Mini/ Semimini Collection

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Optimara Little Blackfoot

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Semiminiature
From the Best Holtkamp Memorial Collection

Why Can't I Grow African Violets Like I Used to?

By Kevin Degner Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Email: kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net

First: a little about me. I belong to two local violet organizations, plus AVSA, and have been growing African violets for more than 45 years. I don't know if it's the soil, fertilizer, water, or my growing conditions, but my violets just don't look as nice as they did years ago.

Perhaps it's the varieties I am growing today, which are mostly chimeras and Russian varieties. Many of today's hybrids are more finicky than those varieties of years ago. Many of us started out growing a violet from Grandma, which might have been a Rhapsodie or Optimara variety. These older varieties usually grew well and flowered without much fuss. Oh, we didn't have the beautiful color combinations of today's hybrids, but nonetheless, we were content with the beautiful blues, purples, pinks and whites of that era.

Choice of Pots and Soil

Over the years I have sat through countless programs on topics such as choosing the correct pot size, using the correct fertilizer, different soilless mixes, lighting (both natural and fluorescent), the best temperature for my violets and how to water African violets.

I remember when we used clay pots to grow violets. They were heavy, dried out quickly, and turned white with fertilizer salts. Leaf stems died quickly if they touched the salt-encrusted rims unless you covered the rims with aluminum foil or dipped them in paraffin wax. Then came along plastic pots and growers thought they had died and gone to heaven.

Choice of potting mediums has changed a lot over the years as well. I had heard of old-time growers using soil straight from the garden. Some would even use rotted cow manure right from a farmer, mixing it into the soil as fertilizer. I would not recommend this unless you were going to heat the soil up to 180 degrees (known as pasteurizing) to kill off the bad bacteria and bugs living in there. Those of you old enough to remember pasteurizing soil in an oven will never forget the smell. Let's just say you only pasteurized soil in the warmer months with the windows open!

> Our soilless mixes do not contain the necessary bacteria to break down the urea ...

Over the years there have been many commercial mixes marketed as African violet soil. Some were good and others not so good, and consistency from one bag or batch to another varied. Today I use a commercial mix to which I add 50 percent more perlite, since I wick water most all of my plants.

New Watering Methods

Watering methods have changed over the years as well. When I first got into growing violets, you either watered from the top or bottom. Now I use the wick-watering method for my violets. It is convenient and provides consistent moisture for the plant, provided the wick doesn't quit working, which on occasion it does. It is a must that you plant in a very porous soil mixture if using this sort of watering method to avoid root rot. My water comes from the city and contains chloramines, which I have been told do not evaporate from an uncapped container as chlorine did. I see there are products on the market that supposedly eliminate chloramines and I might have to try these to see if this makes any difference in how my violets grow.

To my water, I add fertilizer containing urea-free nitrogen. Many of the fertilizers on the market use urea-based nitrogen, which is cheaper for the manufacturer to make and sell. Urea-based fertilizers are okay for plants outdoors because bacteria are available to break down the urea so the plants can use the available nitrogen. Our soilless mixes do not contain the necessary bacteria to break down the urea, thus our violets starve for nitrogen.

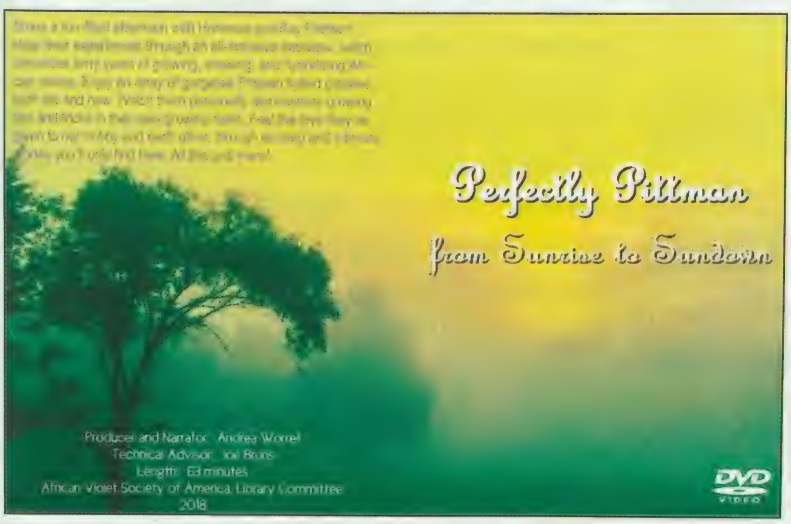
Years ago, I wasn't concerned about what soil I was using. If the bag said potting soil, that was good enough. I used whatever plant fertilizer we had at home at the time. My violets grew nicely under natural light. Now, I try to grow my plants in a temperature/humidity-controlled room in my basement. All my violets are wick watered on separate reservoirs growing under T-12 fluorescent lights. Now, I'm considering possibly changing to LED lighting.

Even though I know so much more than I did years ago about how to make my violets grow and bloom like crazy, my violets don't look all that great to me. Sometimes I think the more I learn and implement with my violets the less happy I am with the outcome. Perhaps I know too much about the variables that should help grow beautiful violets! Have any of you experienced this?

In the AVSA Store

"Perfectly Pittman" Video

This hour-long video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman. It's perfect for anyone who loves African violets and streps - or any flowers - and for AVSA members who have known this treasured couple of the violet world.



AVAILABLE on the AVSA WEBSITE. DVD and Thumbdrive format $20

The AVSA Library Committee gives special thanks to Andrea Worrell and Joe Bruns for the countless hours they volunteered to make this video possible.

Growing Trailers: Linda Abplanalp

By Teresa Odle Email: editor@avsa.org

I wanted to learn and share more information about growing African violet trailers, so I spoke with Linda Abplanalp, hybridizer of Carolina Elegant Affair and other varieties.

First, a little about Linda. Although her mother grew African violets for years, Linda didn't get serious about growing them until about 28 years ago. "My mother could spit on an African violet and it would grow beautifully," she said. "I thought I would know what the criteria were for knowing a good violet by becoming a judge, and forget about the spitting!" said Linda. She now is a new Master Judge. "It is a life achievement," Linda added.

That's tall praise for judges, considering Linda once was chief of hematology at a hospital in Newark, New Jersey. She implemented the hospital's first quality control program in hematology. That sort of attention to detail would come in handy later. Linda now lives in Burlington, North Carolina.

Learning to Grow Trailers

"I saw trailers early on and was afraid of them," said Linda. Then she acquired one either as a purchase or gift and fell in love with semimini trailers. "I thought they were absolutely charming."

She then learned she could make the trailing plants do what she wanted them to do with a little of that attention to detail.

Linda's trailers grow on her plant stands in the same conditions as her other African violets. The only exception is that baby plants and minis are a little closer to the light. She adjusts light for semiminis and variegated varieties depending on "what they are telling me." She said it also is important to gradually increase pot size, as with all African violets. However, because of their multiple crowns, trailers eventually can grow to need a pot that is wider than most while still being shallow, which isn't always easy to find. "I've gone so far as having potters throw me pots to my specifications because I couldn't find the one I needed," said Linda.

Linda's Carolina Jubilation is a young plant, but flowering beautifully and with no yellow leaves or bare stems.

Grooming Trailers

Although trailers have similar cultural requirements to other African violets, they require some different steps in grooming to help them grow into pleasing form. However, the plants are easy to train. "They are very malleable," Linda said. To begin with, you should pinch out the crown of a trailer while the plant is very young. "This forces them into side branches, and that's what you want," said Linda. Pinch the side branches out again when they get to a certain length, which forces suckers to form along the stem.

"When they get to be about 7 or 8 inches across, I stop that nonsense," said Linda. She then removes all the leaves except three to six leaves near the crown. This again forces new leaves to grow on the stem. "I am encouraging as many crowns as I can get," Linda said. If a crown breaks off, she just uses it to start another plant.

Creating a Pleasing Form

Removing old or yellowed leaves helps make the plant look better and more compact. You can begin to create a form around the crowns by training some of the sparse stems. Linda uses bamboo skewers to hold the long stems in position, wrapping them around into a pleasing form. New leaves fill in on those stems and young crowns form in the middle, holding together the compact shape. "You can wait two or three months and take the skewers out and the plant looks terrific," said Linda.

Linda is controlling the form of this Rob's Boolaroo with skewers. You can see the new crowns in the plant's center. Once they are large enough for their leaves to knit together, she will remove the skewers.

> To begin with, you should pinch out the crown of a trailer while the plant is very young.

Each trailer is unique, but the plants typically form a dome shape after consistent grooming. Most also are heavy bloomers. One reason growers might hesitate to try trailers is that we seldom see the plants in stores. Linda suggests trial and error until you're comfortable training the plant. "The main thing is to enjoy them," said Linda, even as you are learning to shape them into exhibit-worthy form. And if you're growing for pleasure, "the only thing you need to do is please you."

Linda's Carolina Elegant Affair has won best in show many times. She enjoys hybridizing and her Carolina Jubilation and Carolina Bodacious both came from breeding Rob's Boolaroo with Scuba Diver. She also hybridizes daylilies. Linda continues to develop new hybrids that she shares with others; she donated leaves from some varieties to our recent *AVM* article contest winners.

Taking Trailers to Show

If you're considering growing and showing trailers, enjoy this advice from Velma Lewis (*AVM*, November to December 2000):

Most trailers take up little room and fare better when crowded on the way to a show than do other African violets. Velma also recommended use of shish kebab sticks, carefully inserting them into the soil to stabilize the plants (and remembering to remove them before judging begins). Because trailers are forgiving, she suggested removing the entire stem if a leaf is broken during transport.

When growing trailers for show, Velma said that if one side of the plant is not blooming, you clip the crowns on that side several weeks before the show and turn the clipped side to get plenty of light. This can help more evenly distribute blossoms. She added that each trailer is unique in form, size and bloom.

You can read Velma's entire article on Grooming and Judging Trailers on the AVSA website by searching from the home page.

Judges' Breakfast Notes 2019 – Houston, Texas

By Paul Kroll

The notes from the Judges' Breakfast meetings have proven to be quite popular and have received positive comments. The purpose of publishing these notes in the magazine is to bring these issues to the attention of AVSA members and judges who were not in attendance at the convention or breakfast meeting. Here are the notes from the 2019 convention.

Mary Corondan, Assistant Chair of the Shows and Judges Committee, announced that all changes to the 2016 edition of the *AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges* soon will be available in a link on the AVSA website.

More AVSA judges are needed. Please encourage those who might be interested in becoming judges. The new school procedure works very well!

Judge Exams

Teachers are using a format that parallels the senior exam format for one portion of the written exam. This portion is mailed to students ahead of the school. They take it as an open book exam, filling in the answers and noting the page numbers in the Handbook where they found the answers. The second portion of the written exam is taken at the school, along with the point scoring of two African violet plants.

Existing judges are encouraged to attend a school in order to keep up with new information and changes. Barbara Werness, senior exam administrator, has agreed to email each year's senior exam to any master judges who wish to take the exam for their own benefit, to keep up with changes, etc. The requests can be made directly to her and the exam will be emailed to those asking for it, after the deadline for submission has passed. Barb also asked that judges send problems encountered to her so that these problems can be addressed in the senior exam(s).

All AVSA teachers should send their email addresses to Bill Foster, 3610 Gray Dr., Mesquite, TX 75150, and Mary Corondan, 434 Plumwood Way, Fairview, TX 75069, to keep communication current.

Affiliates

Affiliates should encourage each new member to use the AVSA Handbook. Affiliates also need to remember to invite student and advanced judges to judge shows so they gain experience.

Sue Hoffmann should be informed of the passing of any and all judges so that she can help to keep the listing up to date. Her contact information is as follows: Sue Hoffmann, 2809 Forest Hills Ct., Virginia Beach, VA 23454-1236, home phone (757) 463-5383 or cell (757) 287-0858. All in attendance were told to check the judges list and inform us of any changes in their state/area.

Both affiliate and convention shows must have all three AVSA collections included in their schedules: Standard, Semi and Mini, and Species. Be certain that the correct collection score sheet is used for each of those.

Score Sheets

Score sheets for the SSA award will be changed soon to reflect the percentage of horticulture entries for African violets and other gesneriads. The show must have 50 percent African violet entries plus at least one more African violet than is entered in the gesneriad classes. Concern was expressed for those judges who have traveled distances to judge a show only to find out that the show will not be accredited for them to use that experience toward their judging credentials. It is possible to adjust some numbers by placing some gesneriads in a "for exhibit only" class if necessary. The ribbons won at the shows where the SSA was not awarded can be used by the exhibitors, but the judges cannot use that show toward their credentials.

Bill Foster said, "We'll see how this works and change things in the future if necessary. We need to encourage growing of AVs."

Other Show and Judging Discussion:

•The price of rosettes now will be $6 each. That information will be published in the *AVM* inside cover.

•Be aware that the second best in show can be chosen from the same class in which the best in show was found. Some shows have neglected to realize this.

•Suggestions were received regarding having a walk-through of the show, or a portion of the show, as a program choice, or at least for the judges and clerks who took part in the current convention show. This will be investigated as to when it might be scheduled.

•Although showrooms do not always have optimum lighting, the use of a flashlight should not be necessary and is not allowed.

•A question was asked about why draping cannot be used on the sides of design niches as well as the back and underlay. This depends upon the schedule for each show. The reason for keeping the sides of the niches free of draping and the use of half-measurements on the wings of niches (which some clubs now use) is to allow maximum light into the niche and onto the design.

•When a club invites judges, it should state up front whether the club will reimburse any expenses. Clubs are encouraged to check the current list of judges before invitations, since the list changes. Some judges believe their credentials are current when they are not.

•An unregistered African violet can be entered in the vintage class, so long as there is some proof of its introduction (a hybridizer's catalog, etc.). First Class for All eventually will have a notation for most vintage African violets.

Please encourage those who might be interested in becoming judges.

•Judging for symmetry was discussed. Judges should look from the top and side, from all angles. A suggestion to pick up the miniature and semi-miniature plants with blossoms totally covering the foliage to judge for symmetry was denied.

•Some judges continue to want to count blossoms. This practice is discouraged since the size of blossom(s) changes that perspective. Rather, judges should consider a ratio based on the size of the plant, using common sense.

•The plant Tina's April Fantasy was entered in a green foliage class at this show. It has been entered in a variegated class at other times. The plant actually displays fantasy marking on the foliage vs. any white that could be taken as variegation. This can be a problem and needs to be handled on an individual basis to do the best we can.

•We cannot call everything a sport! Those plants that are not true to variety description(s) should be scrutinized before labeling as a sport. Not every fantasy that goes solid in color should be called a sport.

•A question was asked about whether the miniature and semi-miniature collection class could be divided for each size. The answer is no, because there are not enough miniatures in existence to make up a separate class.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

•January/February issue: November 1
•March/April issue: January 1
•May/June issue: March 1
•July/August issue: May 1
•September/October issue: July 1
•November/December issue: September 1

Behind the Scenes at the 2019 Annual Convention

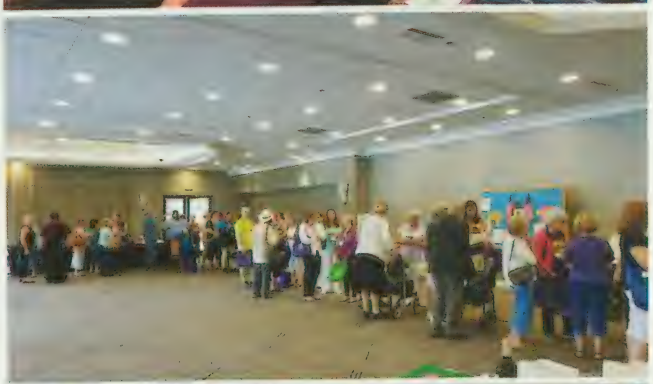
Mary Corondan, who won 2nd Best in Show with Cajun's Lil Forever Blue, prepares her entries. Photo by Neil Lipson.

Kathy Hajner of Hajner Hybrids gets ready in the sales room. She won the award for Best New Cultivar, Commercial, for 19-102. Photo by Tom Glembocki.

Ever wonder how we run so many gorgeous photos? Winston Goretsky was busy as soon as judging ended, photographing show winners and others you'll see in upcoming issues. Photo by Teresa Odle.

The Facebook meet-up at the convention gave African violet groups a chance to meet each other in person. Photo by Richard Craft.

Photos on next page courtesy of Candace Baldwin, Richard Craft, Neil Lipson, and Teresa Odle



Houston AVSA 2019
Fun
In the Texas Sun

Saintpaulias, Montague Free and *The Home Garden*

By C. John Burk Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Recently, while I was reorganizing some bookshelves, I came across a volume titled *1001 African Violets Questions Answered by Twelve Experts*, edited by Helen Van Pelt Wilson and published in 1958. The experts included some married couples (counted as individuals) and among them were Ruth and Lyndon Lyon and Anne and Frank Tinari. Five years earlier, in 1953 and while a senior in high school in Troy, Ohio, I had written a term paper on African violets. Articles by some of these experts were among the references in my bibliography and more than six decades later, might still be familiar to readers of *African Violet Magazine*. Missing, however, from *1001 African Violet Questions* is any mention of Montague Free, whose book *All About African Violets* remains one of my favorites.

> ... he first saw *Saintpaulia ionantha* growing in the tropical greenhouses of the University Botanic Garden ...

About Montague Free

Montague Free (1885 –1965) was born in Cambridge, England, where he first saw *Saintpaulia ionantha* growing in the tropical greenhouses of the University Botanic Garden while a young man working as a gardener. He received a certificate in horticulture from the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew in 1912 and shortly thereafter immigrated to the United States. By 1914 he was head gardener and horticulturist at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, holding these positions through World War II. In addition, in 1943, he was enlisted to join the staff of a new magazine, *The Home Garden*. *The Home Garden* was published monthly from January 1943 through December 1953, and nurtured and sustained the formative years of a generation of American gardeners, those now mostly in their 80s. I was given a subscription when I was a freshman in high school.

First Mentions of *Saintpaulia*

Although in its earlier wartime issues *The Home Garden* emphasized vegetable gardening, a variety of other topics were included from the first issue, and in October 1943, the editor informed the readership

"There's a White Saintpaulia." It had been patented and would soon be on the market as White Lady. The variety Pink Beauty, also patented, had been introduced the year before. By February 1944, an article by Dorothy H. Jenkins announced, "The African Violet Comes of Age." She described the plant as versatile, adaptable, and "as well behaved in the city apartment as in the farmhouse." In addition to Blue Boy, the "standard variety," she also recommended Sailor Boy, Viking and the new White Lady. By November 1945, Montague Free would include *S. ionantha* on a list of 102 reliably blooming houseplants.

Popularity Grew

The year 1947 seems to have been critical in the growing popularity of African violets and their cultivation. Each issue of *The Home Garden* featured an original drawing or painting on its cover. For January 1947, this was an African violet, possibly Blue Boy, drawn by John Burton Brimer. The lead article, "African Violets Have Everything – Including Temperament" by Ida B. Bates, was illustrated by black and white photographs of the author's collection. The collection included plants grown on a window ledge under natural light in sturdy clay pots, some of which were encrusted with salt.

Miss Bates estimated that "nearly 30" varieties had been developed. In the May issue, a prize-winning essay discussed how easily African violets could be propagated; the author, Charles Becker Jr. of Haverford, Pennsylvania, reported starting in March with two store-bought plants and producing 30 blooming plants within the year.

In May 1949, Montague Free's article "African Violet Review: an Old Hand Ponders the Ways of Saintpaulias" presented three case histories, each presenting in detail his personal experiences with specific plants. In September, he included saintpaulias among a "package of recommended flowering houseplants," although he thought one of the varieties illustrated (Double Duchess) was not only "pretentious" but "deplorable."

Speaking as a professional horticulturist, he also observed that given the recent rise in popularity of saintpaulias and their ease in cultivation, "a number of semi-amateurs make a little pin money by selling the surplus raised in their homes."

In May 1950, Free attended the annual convention of the African Violet Society of America for the first time.

A Series on Propagation

In November 1949, *The Home Garden* published the first of Free's series, "Dividends From Your African Violets." This discussed propagation by division and cuttings and was illustrated by photographs taken at various stages of these tasks. The photography used a half-tone process that resulted in pictures in black and white and various shades of gray. In January 1950, the second of the series treated propagation by seeds in similar detail with photographs ranging from flowers before pollination through pollination, the formation of the seed pod, seed planting, germination and the subsequent growth of the seedlings.

In May 1950, Free attended the annual convention of the African Violet Society of America for the first time. This was the fourth convention of the society and was held in Philadelphia. In the July issue of *The Home Garden* in "Free Comments," his monthly column, he described the convention, which he had enjoyed greatly. In particular, Free mentioned meeting "some of the personalities of the African-violet world." Among them, to Free's embarrassment, was Jennie Spoutz, the grower who had introduced the "pretentious" Double Duchess. He found Mrs. Spoutz both charming and forgiving, and they had a friendly discussion on the merits of various varieties.

All About African Violets

By 1950, Montague Free had reached retirement age and was no longer with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. His most recent book, *All About House Plants,* had been published in 1946. Recalling perhaps his work as a gardener at Cambridge where saintpaulias were

thought to be "rather delicate in constitution," Free described how the plants needed the humid, tropical atmosphere provided by a greenhouse. This book included African violets with the comment they were worth growing despite their "finicky dispositions ... rich soil, thorough drainage, fertilizing, no water on the leaves, and shade from direct sun tend to keep them happy." After retirement, he seems to have concentrated his efforts on African violets, and in *All About African Violets*, he would proclaim *Saintpaulia* "one of the toughest and most adaptable of plants for house culture."

All About African Violets was published in 1951. Among its strengths were no fewer than 111 photographs, many of which already had appeared in *The Home Garden*. On the front cover was a color photograph of a strawberry jar that held, at various levels, a dozen plants, among them Double Blue Boy, the variety formerly known as Double Duchess, included perhaps to make amends to Jennie Spoutz.

Another strength of the book is the writing, which is clear, often witty, and intended for readers who would be growing African violets at home under natural temperature and lighting conditions. Sharing his own experiences, Free thanked his wife "for never fussing (well, hardly ever!) about the disruption of our home by an influx of more than a hundred Saintpaulias and by the traipsing in and out of photographers... ." The book has photographs of some of these plants — in Free's study on top of a bookcase; in a south-facing bay window, on a ledge and an adjacent table in the living room, and hanging from hooks in the kitchen.

In 1953, *The Home Garden* celebrated its tenth anniversary. On the front cover of the January issue was a photograph of a Peace rose, celebrated as the Plant of the Decade. Inside on page 41, in "House Plants on the March," Montague Free argued instead that the growing popularity of the African violet and its numerous varieties was the preeminent horticultural event of the past 10 years.

In the July issue, Free reported on the seventh annual convention of the African Violet Society in Nashville, Tennessee, and recent trends in saintpaulia culture. At earlier conferences, exhibitors often had strived to produce big plants. Free now detected a trend toward downsizing, perhaps because of space limitations in private homes since "most Saintpaulias are also rabid collectors, they prefer variety to size." He went on to describe a number of appealing new varieties.

Hence, the magazine has lived on for decades in libraries and on the shelves of used bookstores.

Final Issue

Despite the January celebrations that began the year, the December 1953 issue of *The Home Garden* was its last. I came home for Christmas vacation from my first semester at Miami University to learn this unhappy news. The publisher had announced the demise of the magazine on page 2 of that final issue, stating that it no longer would be published as a separate magazine and "that this bald statement causes us great regret can be taken for granted." On page 3, subscribers learned that *The Home Garden* would be merged with *Flower Grower*. In the final pages of "Free Comments," Montague Free bid his readers farewell with the hope that their holidays would always be happy and their gardens "semperflorens."

Although *The Home Garden* ceased publication, it still has an underground life of its own. Readers tended to save their copies, and for a time, the publishers sold special binders for issue collectors. Hence, the magazine has lived on for decades in libraries and on the shelves of used bookstores. It emerges from time to time in garage and estate sales. Even single copies are offered online and these are still a pleasure to read, offering glimpses into the gardening lives of other decades.

Similarly, *All About African Violets* is a sturdy book, and though its dust jacket might be lost or frayed, Montague Free's advice, based on long experience with living plants, is still worth heeding, and an inspiration.

Contest Entry —

Are You Retail Friendly?

By Mary Thompson Paso Robles, California

Several years ago, I joined a local club and when it came time for their sale and show, I traveled to the three-day show. I had plants to sell. A fellow member of my club, Doris, and her husband, Fred, also came to help sell the club members' plants. Doris and I both entered plants in the show.

As soon as the sale started, the three of us were at tables talking to people, answering questions and helping sell plants, which we did for the three days we were there. We were shocked to notice many other members of the club standing, and most of the time sitting, in the back talking to each other. We thought that was odd. Doris and I had known each other for about 20 years when we first met at a local bird mart. We both raised birds and twice a year, there was a bird mart where we sold our birds.

Be an Attentive Seller

You might wonder what these things have in common. Have you ever gone to a store and had the clerk look up and then go back to doing what he or she was doing when you walked in, never saying a word to you? That's my point.

When you are trying to sell something, and especially when there is competition for the almighty dollar, you need to be there and ready to help people, answer questions (and if you don't know the answer, to find someone who does). I've been in retail most of my working life and being a people pleaser, I go out of my way to help people when trying to sell something, whether it is my "product" or someone else's.

As someone approaches the table, acknowledge them — ask if they have questions or if you can help them.

Ask Questions

When you are at your club sale, stand up and walk to the edge of the table across from where the person is standing. If you stay seated, it makes them feel as if you are not interested. As someone approaches the table, acknowledge them — ask if they have questions or if you can help them. If they say "no," then you've done your job, at least for the time being. Most of the time, someone says, "My plant won't bloom anymore," or "I just can't grow them." I start asking them a series of questions about their plant and try to figure out the problem or give them pointers to try when they get home. In some cases, they will decide to try again and buy another plant to see if they can have more success.

I'm happy to say that the club's members have learned they need to talk to the public. At this year's sale, I noticed more helping customers and more conversation with the public.

Contest Entry —

Humidity Matters

By Tom DeRousse Tucson, Arizona

When I first started growing African violets, I wondered if I could actually grow them. Shopping at our local mall, I looked at the plants and their beautiful flowers. Every year they were being shown, so I bought a plant, took it home, and watered it to death. The next year I tried again and failed. The following year I had heart bypass surgery, which really slowed me down. I needed something to help me overlook the problems that followed. That's when I joined the Tucson African Violet Society and was assigned an excellent mentor who showed me the ropes — what to do and what not to do for the proper care of the violets. I learned about root rot, and why I was watering them to death.

In the years following, I proudly received many blue ribbons and even a best in show award. The plants were doing great, but over the years I became a little lethargic, and started neglecting the violets a bit. They stopped blooming. Many died on me. I now had fewer than 50 plants left from a much larger collection that I once cherished.

A few years ago, I switched from wick watering with a wet tray. I had been having trouble with diseases transferring from one plant to another. I lost a lot of the plants to mealybugs, and that discouraged me from growing African violets. I started growing in individual reservoirs and Oyama pots. My plants were surviving, but not really thriving. That's when I started thinking and realized that I was forgetting one very important ingredient: humidity. By changing my reservoir system, I was forgetting about humidity, a necessary factor for growth and flowering that I once had.

... I was forgetting about humidity, a necessary factor for growth and flowering that I once had.

Living in Tucson, Arizona, where the humidity nearly always is in the single digits, dry air from the air conditioner doesn't help the plants either. So, I partially surrounded the shelves with a see-through covering and added a felt-lined tray that I keep wet. Within a month, the plants started looking a lot better. Buds and flowers started popping up, something I hadn't seen for a long time.

Beginning growing of African violets at 70 years old and after a heart bypass, I needed something to take my mind off my problems. Now, 17 years later and after correcting a few conditions in which my plants grow, I have a renewed interest in my hobby. I am growing beautiful African violets again.

In Memory

Gini McCanne

To her friends, she was simply Gini, as in "Violet Perfection by Gini," which was both how she grew her award-winning plants and the name of her violet business.

A member of AVSA for nearly 40 years, Gini shared her knowledge generously and recently attained Master Judge Emeritus status. A mainstay of several Southern California clubs, as well as the regional organization, Gini served in various positions multiple times.

Gini turned her hobby into a business, selling at club shows and sales, online and at farmers' markets nearly every week of the market season. In addition to African violets and their streptocarpus cousins, Gini sold supplies, including ceramic self-watering planters. As an AVSA commercial member, her Violet Perfection by Gini ad appeared in the *AVM* for years and brought her customers from around the nation.

Gini served in the Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War and has been laid to rest with military honors at Riverside National Cemetery in California. The Southern California violet world will miss her hard-working, spunky, "get the job done" attitude greatly.

Celesta Cirkl

Celesta was born in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. She later moved to Long Island, New York, married and had two daughters. Upon her husband's death, she moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia, where she lived for 31 years. She was in the process of moving with her oldest daughter, Patricia Knight, to Gloucester, Virginia, when she became ill and did not recover.

Celesta loved growing any type of plants, but especially African violets. While in New York, she joined the Heritage African Violet Society and AVSA and, after moving to Virginia, became a member of the Tidewater African Violet Society, the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society and the Aragona Garden Club. Her favorite African violets were from Optimara.

African Violet Magazine Coming Event Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

Contest Entry —

Handy Tips for African Violet Lovers

By Geraldine Silva Springerville, Arizona

I have a passion for African violets. I have been growing violets since 1984. Currently, I have about 200 violets. I grow in natural light in a sunroom and use the wick-watering method. I have been a member of AVSA since the 1980s and have attended a few conventions. After the death of my mother, African violets helped me so much! They were the one thing that could distract me from my grief and they gave me joy and happiness during such a hard time.

Throughout 30 years of growing violets, I have learned several good tips that I hope will help readers too.

1. Re-use dryer sheets (cut to the correct size) to cover drainage holes in the bottom of pots so soil doesn't fall through. I call these my "filters." Rinse the sheets before placing them in the pots.

2. Watch for violet plants on sale at big stores such as Walmart, Lowe's and Home Depot during the holidays. If they look shabby, ask for a discount. These usually are Optimara violets and are great bloomers. Isolate your new plants away from the rest of your violets for 6 to 8 weeks to avoid spreading any insects or diseases that a new plant might have.

3. Four-ply dark colors of acrylic yarn are good for wicking if you use the wick-watering method. It is very inexpensive. I separate the yarn into 2-ply size for small plants and leave it 4-ply size for large plants. If you tie two knots at the end of a wick, it will go down the egg crating more easily. (Egg crating is a plastic screen that plants sit on when wick watering. The wick goes down into a tray that holds fertilized water.) This method is a great timesaver if you have many plants.

4. Ask your favorite restaurant for free condiment cups in which sauces come. These are the perfect size for baby violets. Be sure to make drain holes in the bottom, and then add a circle of dryer sheet "filter" and a wick.

Try using shallow, long plastic containers for propagating leaves.

5. Purchasing an X-ACTO knife is a great investment. It is the tool I use the most for violet chores. I use it to make holes in condiment cups, to pull the yarn wick through the drainage holes, for grooming, cutting leaves at an angle to plant them, and for making holes in clear plastic containers for ventilation.

6. Recycle plastic containers with a clear top to use for plants that need to be isolated or for newly repotted babies. Be sure to put holes in the lid for ventilation so the humidity doesn't cause a problem. Containers that salads and cakes come in are great and free!

7. Save large brown paper bags for "repotting day." Cut open any fold and throw away the bottom. The bags are stronger and thicker than newspaper and can be used several times.

8. Try using shallow, long plastic containers for propagating leaves. Planting many leaves in these takes up less room than planting in condiment cups and it takes less time and materials. Placing a piece of plastic wrap (used for leftovers) over the top helps to make this a small hothouse. Make a few holes for ventilation.

9. Red coffee stirs are perfect for "flagging" plants that need attention.

10. Use your time when watching television to prepare wicks or dryer sheets for covering drainage holes and to make holes in condiment cups.

11. Repotting violets can stain the underside of fingernails. If you apply two coats of clear nail polish before starting, it will protect your nails.

12. If you use wick watering, you can save lots of time when cleaning trays and egg crating by pouring into the tray 1 cup of vinegar, one-half cup of bleach and enough water to cover the egg crating. Let it sit near your sink overnight. The next morning, remove the egg crating first, and dip out some of the water before pouring the rest down the sink or you will splash water all over. Clean any residue remaining in the tray or on the egg crating and rinse both well.

13. Help prevent green algae from growing in your wick-watering trays by adding Physan. You can purchase Physan from vendors listed in *African Violet Magazine* and some local nurseries.

14. Look for items with African violets on them at thrift shops. I have found cups, vases, plates and other items. These can sit among your "real" violets and make the area look more beautiful.

15. Have you ever heard of "Space Violets"? They also are called "EverFloris" varieties because they bloom almost continuously. The Optimara Space Violet program sent more than 25,000 African violet seeds into orbit for nearly six years. Those seeds produce plants that are bigger and easier to grow with large, fuller blooms. There are many varieties that can be found from websites or on E-Bay. The violets are named Optimara EverJoy, Optimara EverGrace, etc. You will adore these terrific bloomers. I could hardly find a time when EverGrace was not in bloom so I could repot it.

16. Tie or pin lace curtains on violet shelves to shield them from direct sun.

17. A small, natural bristle brush is useful for removing spilled soil from leaves.

Red coffee stirs are perfect for "flagging" plants that need attention.

18. Always label every violet with the name and date with a permanent black marker (other pen inks will fade in time).

19. Bookshelves and bakers' racks make good violet shelves. Look for them at thrift stores or home improvement shops.

20. Keep plastic grocery bags stored (out of sight) in your growing area to use for disposing of old leaves, etc., as you groom African violets regularly for health and beauty.

21. To clean tools quickly, fill a small bottle with a good-fitting lid halfway with Physan. Just dip your tools in and wipe them off.

22. When setting a leaf of a variegated variety, use the greenest leaf you can find.

23. To save time and effort when doing African violet chores, organizing all supplies in one container will make the chores go much faster. I use a plastic box for supplies and keep it near my violet work area. It saves many steps!

Do you want to learn more about raising African violets? Consider joining the African Violet Society of America. The bimonthly issues of this magazine are great to help you learn more about raising African violets and you will never find another magazine that has more beautiful photos of violets. Happy growing!

Correction

We have a correction to AVM May/June 2019, page 9, right column. The sentence reading, "A different mutation in the HOX genes leads to the unusual flowers of *Saintpaulia* 'Botanica,' where the stamens and pistils are mixed together" should read: "A different mutation in the HOX genes leads to the unusual flowers of *Saintpaulia* 'Botanica,' where the stamens and petals are mixed together."

How to Grow African Violets Under 4-Foot T8 LED Tubes

By Ronn Nadeau • St. Louis, Missouri • Email: avseeds@yahoo.com

If you grow African violets using 4-foot T8 or T12 fluorescent fixtures, as I do, you might be wondering about switching to 4-foot T8 LED lights. After all, LED tubes use much less electricity, produce less heat, do not wear down, and last longer. But there are several types of 4-foot T8 LED tubes. How do you find the right one? Or, is there even a "right" one?

My four-level plant stand.

When 4-foot T8 fluorescent tubes first came into use by African violet growers, they seemed like a nice improvement over 4-foot T12 fluorescent tubes, which were less efficient. However, some T8 fluorescent tube users found that the brighter light of T8 bulbs caused stunting of new foliar growth.

Now we have T8 LED tubes to consider. Their light is even stronger than T8 fluorescent light, so it might seem foolish to think about replacing fluorescent tubes with any kind of LED tubes (but I found a way, so please read on!)

Measuring Light Exposure

Of course, if you have enough vertical space, you could increase your foliage-to-tube distance when switching to T8 LEDs, but that's not practical with plant stands like mine. So, while working on this study, I used 13 T12 and three T8 fluorescent fixtures. I estimated foliage-to-tube distance (averaged over all African violets in my plant rooms) to be 10 inches. I bought a light meter on Amazon and chose "10 inches" as my standardized detector dome-to-tube distance at which all lux data would be obtained. In other words, all lux values would be determined with the detector dome placed 10 inches (plus or minus one-sixteenth of an inch) below the centers of my tubes prior to reading the meter.

Digital light meter.

Next, I measured lux values under each of my 13 T12 fluorescent (2-tube) fixtures, using the standardized conditions mentioned above. As seen in Table 1, lux values below my T12 tubes varied a great deal from fixture to fixture, with an average of 2,945 lux. That is not surprising because most of my tubes are old and of various makes. From this result and from knowing my plants were growing well under these lights, I concluded that light intensities in a range of 2,400 to 3,200 lux are okay for African violets. However, that range was expanded, as explained below.

Table 1. Lux Values at 10 Inches Below Plant Room Fluorescent Tube Fixtures

	T8 TUBES	
TUBE 1	***TUBE 2***	***LUX***
PHILIPS CW	GE WW	5060
PHILIPS CW	PHILIPS WW	4580
PHILIPS CW	PHILIPS WW	4730
	AVERAGE	**4790**
	T12 TUBES	
TUBE 1	TUBE 2	LUX
SYLVANIA CW	GE WW	2620
PHILIPS CW	PHILIPS WW	3140
SYLVANIA CW	GE WW	3080
PHILIPS CW	PHILIPS WW	2620
PHILIPS CW	GE WW	3420
PHILIPS CW	GE WW	3090
PHILIPS WW	GE WW	2380
SYLVANIA CW	GE WW	2690
PHI, F40T12/CW	GE WW	2920
WESTINGH. CW	GE WW	3220
SYLVANIA CW	GE WW	2910
SYLVANIA CW	GE WW	3010
SYLVANIA CW	GE WW	3180
	AVERAGE	**2945**

Measuring light-to-violet distance.

As seen in Table 1, intensities under my T8 fluorescent tubes averaged 4,790 lux. This is the first report of a lux value being assigned to the high lux causing tight centers. In addition, there is another clue about the strength of light that we should not exceed for African violets. Anecdotal reports state that new T12 fluorescent tubes are too "hot" and should be broken in for a time before being used on African violets. I purchased new Philips T12 cool white and warm white tubes and found that both colors produced about 3,550 lux at 10 inches below the tubes (see Table 2). From this, I cautiously suggest that 3,500 lux is near the limit of what to look for as safe for LED lighting on African violets.

Table 2. Lux Values from New Philips Fluorescent Tubes at 10 Inches Below the Tubes

TUBES	LUX
TWO NEW PHILIPS T12 WARM WHITE	3520
TWO NEW PHILIPS T12 COOL WHITE	3540
TWO NEW PHILIPS T8 WARM WHITE	4580
TWO NEW PHILIPS T8 COOL WHITE	5180

Researching LED Lights

Having determined my 4-foot T8 LED lighting should not exceed 3,500 lux, I researched available 4-foot LED tubes for ones that might be helpful. My best option seemed to be 4-foot T8 LED tubes made by Hyperikon. I purchased a box of six via Amazon for $48. Amazingly, they fit and work in used T8 and T12 fluorescent fixtures after rewiring those fixtures to bypass their ballasts. With instructions from an article I found on the Internet, along with a YouTube video, I easily converted six 4-foot fluorescent fixtures to 4-foot T8 LED fixtures. Not having to buy new, expensive LED fixtures for these tubes is a great cost savings.

Next, I determined lux values at 10 inches below each of my six new Hyperikon tubes. They can be run with one or two tubes per converted fixture. When run with only one tube, my six fixtures showed intensities ranging from 3,900 to 4,200 lux. That's an average of 4,080 lux per tube! This greatly surprised and delighted me.

Single 18-watt LED tubes produced more light at 10 inches below (4,080 lux), than did two new 40-watt T12 fluorescent tubes combined (3,530 lux, Table 2). I thought, "Do those '18 watt' tubes really use only 18 watts?" You have to wonder. The numbers represent electricity savings of 78 percent for LEDs over T12 fluorescents, and 72 percent for LEDs over T8 fluorescents.

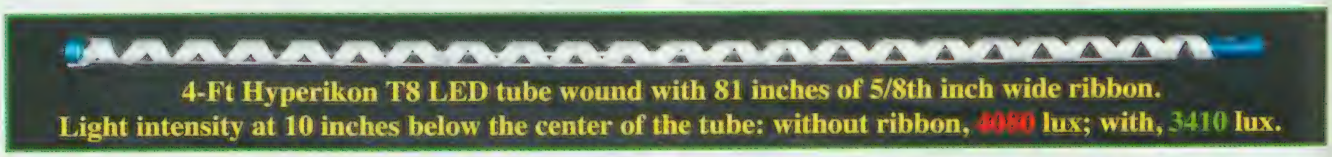
Even with only one tube per fixture, the 4,080 lux from my Hyperikon tubes is too much. Therefore, I devised a way to dim any tube to a desired lower lux. I applied materials, including white ribbons of various widths, to the Hyperikon tubes. I tested tube lux values before and after application. This was done using the setup shown in the picture. It is a slight variation of the method described above to measure lux under fluorescent fixtures in my plant rooms.

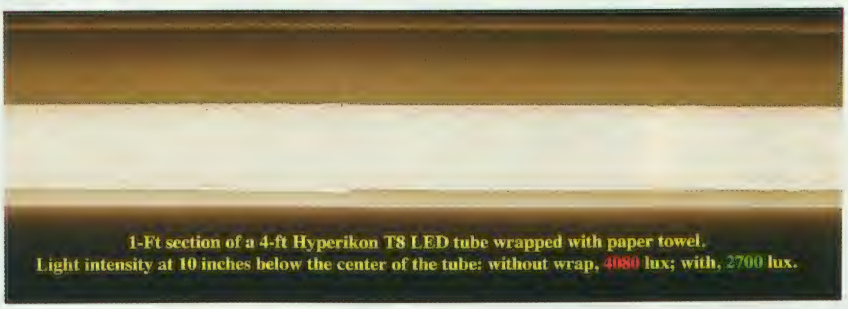
The Hyperikon LED tube shown in the photo is wound with 81 inches of white ribbon that is five-eighths inches wide. It had 4,080 lux before winding the ribbon and 3,410 lux after. It has been in service 12 hours per day for a month and looks just like it did when I installed it. You can easily control the degree of dimming by the width of ribbon used and the spacing of the winding. The same tube wound with 110 inches of the same ribbon produced a tube emitting 3,150 lux.

That's how to create one-tube 4-foot T8 LED fixtures that emit light intensities comfortable for African violets and use only 18 watts of energy, without requiring new LED fixtures! I hope other growers will find this method practical and valuable.

Another Way to Test Light

Here's an example of another way to use a light meter. A customer asked if it was practical to grow African violets on a card table with a 23-watt compact fluorescent (CFL) light above it. Using my light meter, a tape measure, a desk lamp, and a 23-watt CFL bulb, I found the following lux-at-distance numbers: 4,900 lux at 10 inches (too much!), 3,500 lux at 12 1/2 inches, and 2,700 lux at 14 inches below the tubes. I recommended he place his lamp so that the face of the bulb is no closer than 13 inches from the foliage of his plants, and not much farther away than 15 inches.





Hyperikon LED tube wrapped in white ribbon (top) and in paper towels (bottom).

Other materials can be used for dimming. For example, I also wrapped four strips of paper cut from two Kirkland brand paper towels, measuring 3 1/2 inch x 11 inches, around a Hyperikon tube and attached them with tape. The tube emitted 2,700 lux. Tubes wound with paper in this way have the advantage of producing diffused light more similar to fluorescent tubes.

I converted four of my fluorescent plant stand shelves to emit light from dimmed Hyperikon LED tubes. Two shine at 3,000 lux and two at 3,400 lux. After I observe them for a period, I will write a follow-up article about my results.

Setup and Method

Here are details about the setup and method used to test lux values for fluorescent tubes and LED tubes unwrapped and wrapped. A Hyperikon LED tube (in a converted fixture) was suspended over the test area from a pair of brackets.

Hyperikon LED tube in converted fixture.

On the shelf below, the light meter detector laid on a book. A tape measure, set to a length of 10 inches from the bottom of its base to the start clip, stood on top of the detector dome. Adjustments were made so that

A tape measure sits atop the light meter to set up precise distance.

the 10-inch length of tape measure fitted very closely between the detector dome at the bottom and the tube above. I turned on the light being tested and turned off all other lights in the room. I then removed the tape measure to expose the detector dome to light from the tube above. I moved the detector dome slightly to find the area of highest lux and recorded the resulting value.

Materials

My light meter is a Dr. Meter LX1330B Digital Light Meter. All new fluorescent tubes were Philips brand. LED tubes were Hyperikon 4-foot T8 LED Hybrid 18 watt, glass, 4000k. I used a Topenca Supplies White, 5/8 inch x 50 yards double face solid satin ribbon (purchased via Amazon) to wind the T8 LED bulbs.

I am pleased to acknowledge Linda J. Sumski for her helpful communications during the hands-on phase of this work. She also carefully and helpfully edited the manuscript.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

***Primulina* 'Deco'**

Exhibited by: Robbie McMeel
Hybridized by: P. Shalit

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Ness' Crinkle Blue

Exhibited by: Linda Sumski
Hybrdized by: D. Ness
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Buckeye Extravaganza

Exhibited by: Wayne Geeslin
Hybridized by: P. Hancock
Large Standard
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African Violet Terms

Blossom Traits

Chimera: Blossoms with stripes that radiate from the center, pinwheel, that arise from a mosaic of genetic traits.

Double: Blossoms with at least two layers of petals.

Fantasy: Blossoms that are splotched, streaked, or rayed with contrasting color or deeper shade of the same color. The blossoms can be of any kind or shape.

Frilled: Blossoms have heavily serrated or frilled outer lobes. The blossoms can be any kind or shape.

Edged: Lobes of the blossoms are edged with any color. Blossoms can be any shape.

Geneva or Geneva edged: Lobes of the blossoms are edged with white.

Multicolor: Blossoms with two or more colors.

Semidouble: Blossoms that possess more than the standard five lobes, such as those blossoms with a crest or tuft at the center, but less than a full second row of petals.

Single: Blossoms have five lobes, appear single, with two upper lobes that are usually smaller than the three lower ones.

Star: Blossoms have five lobes of about equal size and distance from one another. The blossoms can be single, semidouble, or double.

Two-tone: Blossoms having two or more shades of one color.

Wasp: Blossoms are single and each lobe is very narrow.

Foliage Types

The shape and color of the leaves can be distinctive.

Bustle: Leaves are compound with one large and two smaller lobes.

Compound: See Bustle.

Girl: Deeply scalloped leaves, usually rounded or heart shaped with white to yellow marking at the base of each leaf.

Holly: Heavily crested leaves with the leaf edges curled forward or bent back with exaggerated wavy edges resembling holly in form.

Longifolia (Spider): Narrow pointed strap-like leaves with either plain or wavy edges.

Ovate: See Spooned.

Piggyback: See Bustle.

Plain or Tailored: Plain in texture and form; sometimes known as standard or boy foliage.

Pointed: Ends of the leaves come to a definite point.

Quilted: Leaves have distinct raised areas between the veins. Some leaves have pie-crust edging.

Ruffled (Frilled, Wavy, or Fluted): Leaves have serrated or ragged edges.

Spooned, Cupped-up: Leaves are concave with high edges like a spoon.

Supreme: Leaves are thick, hairy, and quilted with strong pencil-like petioles.

Wasp: see Bustle.

Variegated Foliage

Variegated: Leaves can be marked with white, cream, light yellow, or rosy shades from light pink to a deep wine red, in addition to shades of green. This defines all variegation other than Crown or Mosaic variegation.

Crown Variegation: This variegation is usually restricted to the center or crown of the plant and turns green as it progresses to the outer layers of the foliage. Also called Champion variegation.

Mosaic Variegation: A mosaic pattern over the entire leaf. Formerly called Lillian Jarrett variegation.

Tommie Lou Variegation: This was one of the first and most distinctive types, occurring primarily on the edge of the leaf; now referred to simple as variegated.

Adapted from Dorothy Kosowsky, 2004.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

N-Duimovochk (Thumbelina)

Exhibited by: Belinda Thibodeaux
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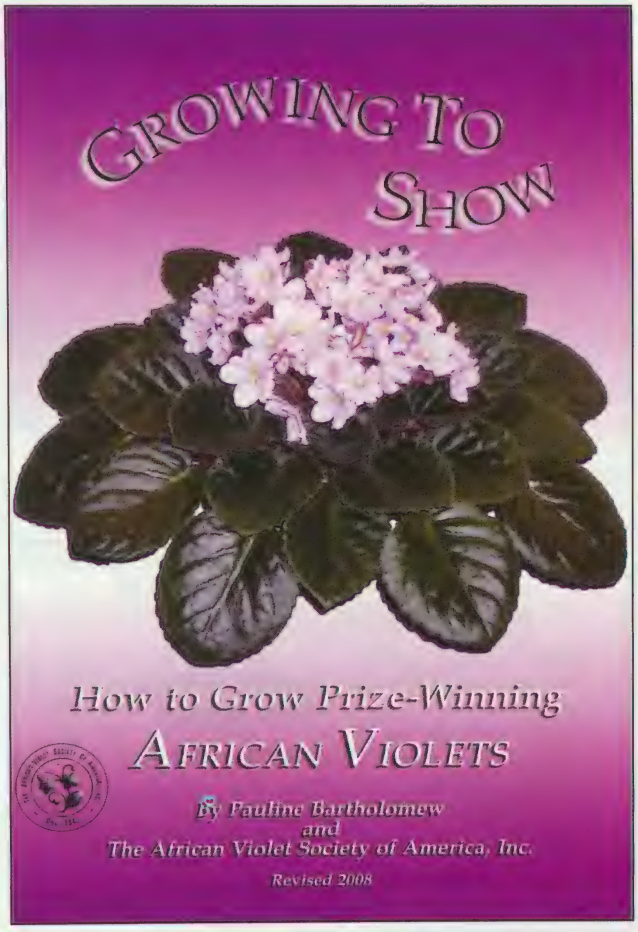

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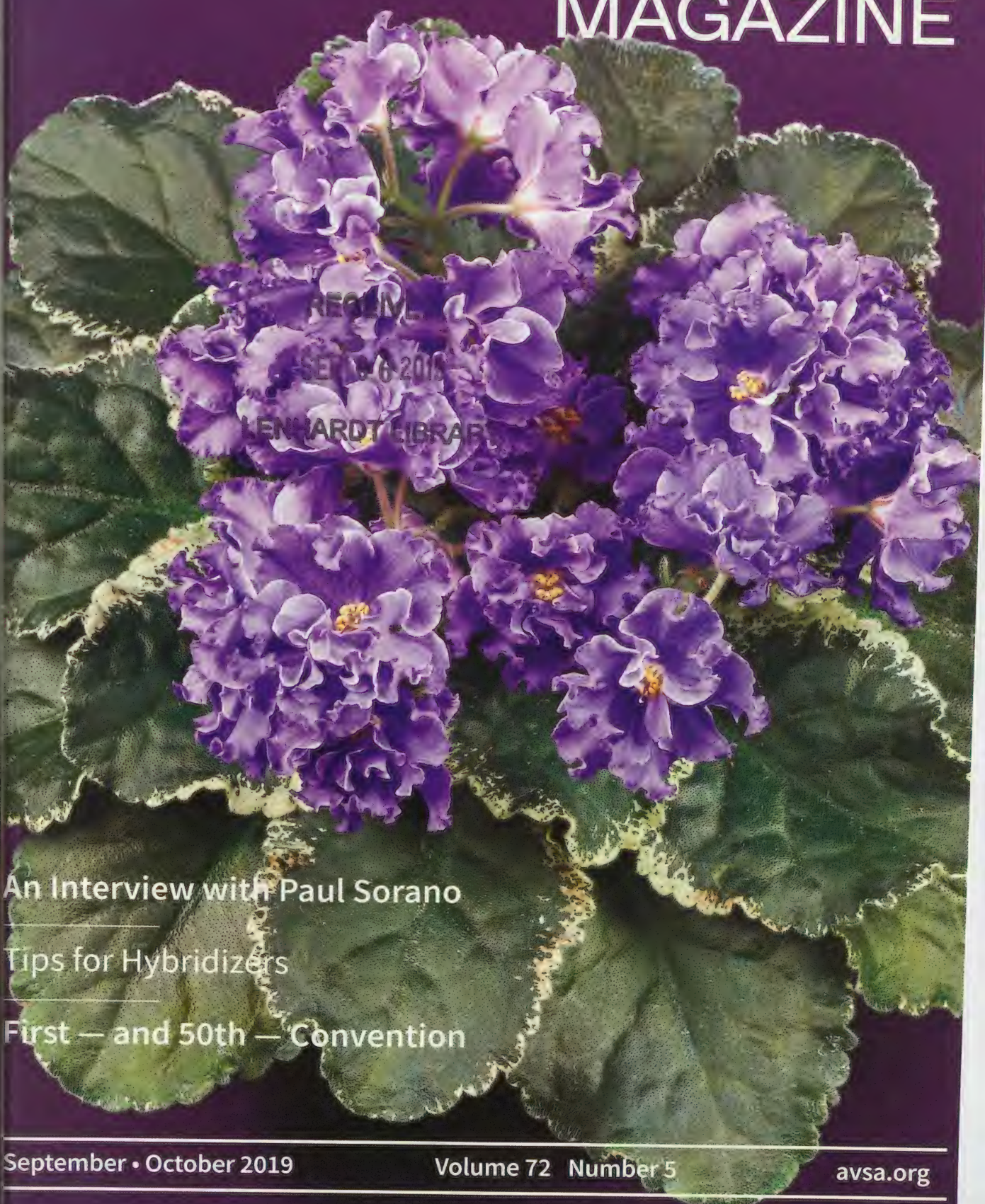

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Volume 72 Number 5

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Sue Ramser

2413 Martin St. • Wichita Falls, TX 76308
Email: president@avsa.org

To Our AVSA Friends:

It is hard to think about the fall and cooler weather while this column is being written. It is summer here; maintaining our plants through the summer and keeping them on schedule for the fall shows is a priority. As you read this, many fall meetings and shows already are scheduled. Good luck to all of you as you prepare your exhibits for these shows.

Boyce Edens Scholarship

Congratulations are extended to our 2019-2020 AVSA Boyce Edens College Scholarship recipient, Ms. Caitlin Edsall of Red Oak, Texas. Caitlin is a senior at Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas. Our Scholarship Chair, Dr. Charles Ramser, will share more information in the future about Caitlin and her future plans along with application information for the 2020-2021 Scholarship.

New Committee Chairs

Sharon Gartner has been appointed as the new Convention Show Awards Chair. She has begun preparing the list of Special Awards (see page 40). Please contact her if you would like to donate an award for the 2020 AVSA Convention and Show in Little Rock. A motion approved at the 2019 Annual Convention increases the award amounts given for each of the Best and 2nd Best AVSA Collections exhibited in the Annual Show to $150 and $75, respectively.

Another new committee chair appointment is Linda Hall. Linda will chair the Society Awards Committee. If you know someone who deserves special AVSA recognition, please contact Linda. The list of Society Awards can be found on the AVSA website.

Annual Convention

Danny Tidwell and his 2020 AVSA Convention Committees, along with Kathy Lahti, Convention Director, are hard at work planning the 2020 Convention and Show in Little Rock. Please be sure to read the articles about this convention in this and future issues of *AVM*.

We always welcome invitations and suggestions from different areas of the country to host a convention. If you or your affiliate have a suggestion or invitation to extend, please contact Kathy Lahti or me.

Other Help and Happenings

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund was established by David Burde to honor Barbara's memory. The goal of this fund is "to support and enhance operations of AVSA related to technology."

The AVSA Nominating Committee and its Chair, Randy Deutsch, welcome applications for directors and for future officers. To become an officer, an applicant must have served as a member of the Board of Directors for two years. If you or someone you know would like to submit an application, go to the website's (www.avsa.org) Members section, where the application is available.

Your AVSA Executive Committee is always looking for those of our members who possess a special talent. If you have a special talent and the time to share with us, we would like to hear from you. Volunteers are always needed and encouraged.

If you have concerns, suggestions or information you would like to share, feel free to contact me. My contact information is above, on page 2 of the *AVM* and on the AVSA website. Your AVSA Executive Committee will be meeting in November. If you have concerns or items you would like the Executive Committee to consider, send those items to me for inclusion on the agenda.

Please remember: Through our two-way COMMUNICATION, African Violets Continue to Connect Us!

In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306
Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

The last question in this column in the previous issue was about the hybridizing of trailers. That question produced a number of follow-up inquiries about how to hybridize for specific combinations of traits on trailers. This column will attempt to respond to some of those questions.

Q: How do you breed for a "trailer"?

A: There are likely several ways to breed for a "trailer." The reason is that there are several types of plant growth forms that have been lumped together under the same classification of "trailer." In general, a trailer is an African violet that has elongated internodes between the areas where the leaves attach to the stem. Trailers also should have several growing points or apical meristems on the plant. In contrast, rosette African violets should have a single apical meristem and the internodes are very close together, causing the leaves to form the typical rosette pattern.

In some trailers, the internode regions are highly elongated and form a creeping stem that dangles over the sides of the pot. In others, the internode areas are not as elongated, but the plant produces many branches with apical meristems. This growth form is sometimes called a "bush" type trailer. The bush-type trailers often are more compact than the creeping stem trailers and tend to fill in a pot with foliage more easily.

Creeping stem trailers and the bush-type trailers probably are caused by unrelated genes and the inheritance patterns may or may not be similar. My work with species trailers found that the F1 hybrids between a trailing species plant and a rosette plant usually were intermediate in growth form. If a creeping stem trailer was used as one parent, there was a high chance that the F1 offspring also would be creeping stem trailers, although the length of their internodes was smaller and the plants were more compact. Crosses of a bush trailer with a rosette plant tended to produce intermediate plants as well, but many were rosette plants that suckered quite freely. A little grooming to limit the number of suckers sometimes produced an acceptable "trailing" plant. However, many F1 plants were just nightmares, with many suckers, and shaping was impossible.

> Your best strategy to produce trailers is to cross a trailer with another trailer.

Your best strategy to produce trailers is to cross a trailer with another trailer. This should conserve the trailing growth habit in your F1 offspring. The same strategy should work for either creeping stem trailers or bush-style trailers. If you cross to a rosette plant, try to use a creeping stem trailer as the trailing parent. This should produce better trailers in your F1 offspring. A bush trailer might work, but be prepared to have many F1 plants that sucker freely.

Q: What would you suggest for developing a trailer with coral red flowers?

A: I did some research using First Class and did not find many trailers listed with coral pink or coral red flowers. Coral colors are recessive to non-coral colors so producing a trailer with coral red flowers is likely to take two generations, because you'll likely have to use a rosette plant to get the coral red color.

I would suggest using a pink or fuchsia red creeping trailer for one parent. This parent has the trailing

habit but not the coral flower colors. Choose a good coral red rosette plant as the other parent. This parent doesn't have the trailing growth form, but has the flower color. If you want variegated leaves, use the variegated plant as the seed parent. You might wish to work with miniature or semi-miniature coral red rosette plants to control the overall plant size. Hopefully, your F1 plants will be trailers, but in non-coral colors such as pink or fuchsia reds. Try self-pollinating the best seedling or crossing the best F1 plants together. This should conserve the trailing habit for the F2 generation.

If you cross two fuchsia red trailing F1 plants together, the probability for a trailing coral red in the F2 generation would be 25 percent. If you cross a trailing pink F1 with a trailing fuchsia red F1, you should get about 12 percent trailing coral pinks and 12 percent trailing coral reds in the F2 generation.

If one of the fuchsia red F1 offspring has a strong creeping trailer growth form, you might try backcrossing to the coral red rosette parent. You risk losing the trailing growth form but the chance for coral red flowers will increase to nearly 50 percent. A similar breeding plan might work if you start with a bush trailer parent. However, I would be concerned whether the F1 plants would show enough trailing habit to really meet your goal of a trailing coral red.

Q: Can trailing be combined with girl foliage?

A: Yes, the trailing growth habit can be combined with girl foliage. This can be done by using a creeping trailer as one parent and a girl foliage plant as the other. The F1 offspring should be at least 50 percent girl foliage and hopefully retain some degree of trailing. Girl foliage tends to shrink the plant size so you might want to use a larger growing trailer in the cross to keep the leaves from being too close together in the F1 offspring. I would not suggest using a bush-style trailer in this cross because the combination of shorter internodes and girl foliage is likely to make for a messy foliage presentation in the F1 plants.

Q: How would trailer size traits show up if crossed with a rosette plant?

A: Trailers are classified by the size of their leaves, not by the length of the trails or stems. The size of the offspring would likely be similar to what would be seen in crossing rosette-style plants with each other. For example, a miniature trailer crossed with a miniature rosette plant should produce all miniature offspring. A miniature trailer crossed with a semi-miniature rosette plant should produce miniature and semi-miniature plants.

Crossing a miniature trailer with a standard rosette would likely produce intermediate-sized offspring. The latter offspring might be either small standards or large semi-miniatures. There might be some plants that approach miniature size or standard size, but I would think most would be intermediate between the parents.

Clackamas foliage is known for being difficult to shape in a rosette plant ...

Q: Could the clackamas leaf be combined with a trailer?

A: You should be able to combine the clackamas (watermelon vein) leaf type by crossing a clackamas foliage plant with a creeping stem trailer. The clackamas foliage trait is reported as a genetic dominant and about half of the F1 offspring should have the trait. Clackamas foliage is known for being difficult to shape in a rosette plant, so I don't know how the leaves will behave on a trailing growth form. This might be one of the combinations that is possible, but doesn't result in an attractive plant.

Q: Can bustled foliage be combined with a trailer?

A: Yes, bustled foliage is another dominant leaf trait that can be combined with the trailing habit in just one generation if the trailing parent has the creeping stem growth habit. For example, there are several Senk hybrids, such as Senk's Merlot, that are trailers with bustled foliage. It should be easy to create similarly trailing hybrids with bustled foliage.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Optimara Little Arapahoe

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
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A Family Portrait: *Nautilocalyx glandulifer*

By Paul Kroll

5953 Broadway, No. 128 • Lancaster, NY 14086
Email: pfkroll@me.com

Nautilocalyx glandulifer is a lovely plant to grow. I have grown many of the species of the *Nautilocalyx* over the years. They love heat and humidity, so I was not certain how this one would tolerate my apartment conditions. It is doing just fine at the end and edge of a shelf with four T-8 bulbs. I grow it in my regular African violet potting mix, watering once a week, as I do all my plants. At this time, the plant is in a 4-inch pot and does not need to have a larger one than that; it can be kept at this size.

Nautilocalyx is one of the tuberous genera of gesneriads. Many of them have a thickening of the stem below the soil as opposed to an actual tuber formation such as we see on *Sinningia*.

The plant regularly sends up new shoots and cuttings root easily in a light mix.

N. glandulifer has never actually gone dormant for me, but I know that it will occasionally. The plant later will re-sprout from the "root ball." Some people have reported a skin irritation from handling *Nautilocalyx*. That has not happened to me.

Nautilocalyx glandulifer. Photo by Mel Grice.

N. glandulifer has very thin leaves that are purplish-bronze in color. It blooms rarely for me, but the foliage is so ornamental that it can be exhibited in the classes for gesneriads grown for ornamental factors other than bloom. The leaves are very shiny and remind me of the purple passion plant, although not nearly so hirsute (hairy).

The plant regularly sends up new shoots and cuttings root easily in a light mix. I have given away many of these as starter plants and they seem to thrive for others as well. Annual repotting keeps the plant happy and growing easily and well. Try *N. glandulifer*; you'll like it!

Beyond the Blossom—Paul Sorano

By Richard Craft Las Vegas, Nevada

There is an abundance of beautiful African violet blossoms out there. Let's face it—that is why many of us buy these venerable flowering houseplants. Have you ever wanted to know more about the people responsible for producing these colorful creations? Let's go behind the scenes and discover the people beyond the blossom.

At the AVSA Convention in Houston, Texas, I sat down with Paul Sorano, the owner of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses. I wanted to step behind the curtain and discover how Paul had started in the African violet business, gather some insight into his hybridizing program, and find out how he grows all those wonderful plants. It all started with his grandfather, Lyndon Lyon, in the small village of Dolgeville, New York.

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses

In 1954, Lyndon Lyon's goal of developing an African violet with a double pink blossom came to fruition. He named it 'Double Bountiful' and showed it at the AVSA convention in St. Louis that year. According to a November 1986 *AVM* article by David Buttram, "the new pink double was an instant hit and when someone offered Lyndon $1000 for the plant, he recognized the commercial possibilities." Soon, Lyndon began selling plants out of his home, converting the entire second floor into a growing area.

That same year, Lyndon built his first greenhouse. His early fascination with the African violet led him to establish a thriving international mail-order business. Needing more space to pursue his growing hybridization program, he built a second greenhouse in 1956 and completed a third greenhouse in 1959.

Here is Paul's early recollection of when he first became interested in his grandfather's horticultural work: "I was 12 years old. My grandfather already had the greenhouses, but he was still growing out of the house where he had started. The whole second floor was all homemade, three-tiered light stands. He was into roses—violets [were] the breadwinner—but the roses were his passion. I would pot his seedlings. That got me going. It seemed cool to be upstairs . . . and it was all lights and little alley ways. It was like a little jungle, being in the rainforest." Paul had many fond childhood memories helping his grandfather, wandering through the greenhouses and exploring the upper story "jungle."

Glacier Bay, a semiminiature from Lyndon Lyon. Photo by Paul Sorano.

Paul worked for his grandfather on and off until college. He then took a job at General Electric working as a chemical engineering lab technician. Around 1974, his father and grandparents convinced Paul to come back and help with the family business. A few months after leaving his technician job, GE significantly reduced their workforce. "I always wondered if I made the right decision," he says. I'm sure most readers will agree that he did.

In 1983, Paul and then wife, Sidney, bought the greenhouses and installed fluorescent fixtures beneath the growing benches, doubling the growing area.

Fantasy Finale, a new introduction. Photo by Paul Sorano.

Paul tended to the greenhouse maintenance and did the bookkeeping for the still-thriving business. Sidney used her talent and love for hybridizing. She is responsible for 784 hybrids developed between 1982 and 2012.

Over the years, a number of hybrids have been developed by a handful of hybridizers working in collaboration with Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses. Looking through the First Class database, there are well over 1,600 hybrids that have come out of those three 1950s-era greenhouses.

Hybridizing Goals

Paul has two hybrids listed in 1982, but it wasn't until the 2000s that he seriously started hybridizing African violets. Currently, Paul has more than 200 registered hybrids. What were some of his goals as a hybridizer? "In the beginning … I might have been doing what looked good to me. I'd like to take this trait and maybe put it on this variegated foliage. It was more just trying to combine things … something new and different," he says. Paul wanted that blossom that was larger or redder, or with a better edge or a combination of edge, stripes and fantasy. "In the beginning I just wanted to see what I could do."

What's in a Name?

As for naming new hybrids, Paul gives full credit to Debbie Lamphere (Herringhsaw, DiCamillo) for naming most hybrids since the late 1990s. He likes to name any new chimeras developed in-house. There are plenty of interesting names. "I tried to make a name fit, like if something was white and red, I would try to give it a name that would make you think of something that was white and red." Some examples are:

- **Cranberry Crush** (Single pink sticktite frilled star/maroon fantasy, wide maroon edge. Standard.)
- **Glacier Bay** (Semidouble-double mottled light blue and white star. Semiminiature.)
- **Lyon's Frosty Pink** (Semidouble mauve and pink pansy/plum edge. Standard.)

And there are the more expressive names, such as:

- **Cosmic Blast** (Single purple large sticktite star/fuchsia-red fantasy, frilled white edge. Standard.)
- **Evening's Descent** (Semidouble blue frilled star/pink fantasy, raspberry edge. Standard)
- **Regal Crest** (Double coral pink frilled star/darker eye, blue fantasy, raspberry edge. Standard.)

If a plant would sport and had a two-part name, Paul says he would try to use one of the two names and then add a different part. Take, for example, this group of unique names: **Psychedelic Moon** (Double chimera purple frilled pansy/white stripe, Standard) and **Psychedelic Rose** (Double pink frilled pansy/blue fantasy, Standard), both sports of **Psychedelic Show** (Double chimera pink pansy/white stripe, blue fantasy, Standard). There was yet another sport from this series, but Paul's workers asked him to name it something completely different because they were having trouble spelling "psychedelic."

What happens after a potential hybrid is given a name that befits its character? Even in a large greenhouse operation, the process of bringing a new African violet hybrid to market can take years. The new plant must remain stable over three growth generations. Then, an adequate supply has to be grown out to be ready for the influx of eager buyers. An ideal time to announce the new introduction(s) is usually around the AVSA National Convention. It's always exciting to attend the opening event and watch as photos of new African violet hybrids flash across the screen.

Yearly Introductions

As for Lyndon Lyon's new introductions, Paul says his greenhouses put out about 16 plants each year. "We used to do 40 back in my grandfather's time. But he was a pretty active hybridizer and you reach a point where you feel like you're hitting a plateau."

Some of the new 2019 introductions are mentioned in the examples above. Below are three more interesting hybrids:

- **Fantasy Finale** (Double light pink ruffled star/blue fantasy, raspberry edge. Standard.)
- **Ice Age** (Double light blue and white star. Semi-miniature.)
- **Lies 'n' Alibis** (Double purple frilled star/white edge. Standard.)

Before leaving for the Houston convention, Paul noticed something different on the growing benches where Lies 'n' Alibis is being grown out for production. There just might be a chimera sport coming out of it in the near future.

So, what does the future hold for new African violets from Paul? "With all the hybridizers, especially some of the ones overseas now … I've been really impressed by what I've been seeing. I've been crossing with some of that stuff too. I've got a couple new things coming next year that I'm pretty excited over."

Final Words

Paul adds: "I've been coming to conventions about 40 years. I always liked going to conventions, different places of the country to see," Paul says. Initially, the trips mostly were about sales to keep the business going. But as the years passed, his reasons for attending became more about seeing friends. "I live up in an area that's pretty secluded. All my friends from school are pretty much moved on or gone. My only chance to see real friends these days is coming to the convention. That's one of my favorite things; I really look forward to seeing everybody."

There you go, folks. Make plans for next year's AVSA Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, and be sure to stop by the Lyndon Lyon sales area and give a shout-out to Paul Sorano.

Lyndon Lyon Growing Medium

Then:
Cornell Soilless Mix
3 parts peat moss
2 parts vermiculite
1 part perlite
Limestone (undetermined quantity)

Now:
1 part PRO-MIX BX Biofungicide + Mycorrhizae
1 part perlite

Can a Pocket Jackknife Make You a Better Hybridizer?

By Richard Craft

Paul Sorano of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses offers this great tip for hybridizing African violets that he picked up from his grandfather, Lyndon Lyon:

According to Paul, "He would put his thumb underneath the front side of the pollen sacs and he would take his jackknife and just pull back a little bit." The stems of the anthers would have just a little bit of a springy action. "He then would pull the knife away and they [the anthers] would snap against his fingernail.

The momentum from the snapping would throw a lot of the pollen out. "His fingernail would be covered with pollen and then he could just go around and smear it onto all the pistils of the flowers that he was working on."

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

RS-Zimniy Tsvetok

Exhibited by: Paul Sorano
Hybridized by: S. Repkina
Semiminiature Trailer
Best African Violet in Show - Commercial

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

LE-Zlato Skifov

Exhibited by: Kathy Hajner
Hybridized by: E. Lebetskaia
Standard

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Joan Baker — Thief River Falls, MN

Rivermist Frenzy
•(11188) 05/10/2019 •J. Baker
•Single-semidouble bright pink cupped large fluted star/dark blue-purple fantasy.
•Variegated medium green and pink, ovate, quilted, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Rivermist Revenge
•(11189) 05/10/2019 •J. Baker
•Single-semidouble dark blue-purple star/white puff fantasy, pink streaks.
•Variegated dark green and pink, ovate, quilted, glossy, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Rivermist Venus
•(11190) 05/10/2019 •J. Baker
•Semidouble-double light pink large fluted star/white puff fantasy.
•Variegated medium green and pink, ovate, quilted, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses — Dolgeville, NY

Beach Party
•(11191) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Single-semidouble light pink frilled star/darker eye, blue fantasy.
•Variegated dark green and cream, wavy/red back.
•Standard.

Evening's Descent
•(11192) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble blue frilled star/pink fantasy, raspberry edge.
•Variegated dark green, cream and pink, quilted/red back. •Standard.

Fantasy Finale
•(11193) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double light pink ruffled star/blue fantasy, raspberry edge.
•Variegated dark green and yellow, serrated/red back. •Standard.

Forever Blue
•(11194) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble-double light blue frilled star/darker eye, streaks.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted.
•Standard.

Glacier Bay
•(11195) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble-double mottled light blue and white star.
•Light green, quilted, serrated. •Semiminiature.

Ice Age
•(11196) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double light blue and white star.
•Light green, plain, serrated. •Semiminiature.

Jungle Princess
•(11197) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble-double pink and white star/darker eye.
•Medium green, ovate, serrated girl foliage.
•Semiminiature.

Lacey's Claire
•(11198) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble-double pink frilled star/darker veins.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted/red back.
•Standard.

Lacey's Sophia
•(11199) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble-double pink frilled two-tone star/raspberry fantasy.
•Light green, wavy. •Standard.

Lies 'n' Alibis
•(11200) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double purple frilled star/white edge.
•Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Little Wonder
•(11201) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double white and pink ruffled star/green edge.
•Medium green, plain, quilted. •Semiminiature.

Lyon's Frosty Pink
•(11202) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble mauve and pink pansy/plum edge.
•Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Peaceful Sleep
•(11203) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double blue frilled star/white-pink puff fantasy.
•Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Purple Waters
•(11204) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double lavender-white wavy pansy/random purple on petal edges.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, serrated.
•Standard.

Regal Crest
•(11205) 05/11/2019 •P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double coral pink frilled star/darker eye, blue fantasy, raspberry edge.
•Dark green, quilted. •Standard.

Spice Island
•(11206) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble red frilled pansy/darker tips on upper petals, random pink edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream/red back.
•Standard.

Sunshine Girl
•(11207) 05/11/2019 •D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Double white, yellow and pink frilled star/green edge.
•Medium-dark green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Hortense Pittman — Celina, TX

Jolly Cherry
•(11208) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble dark rose-pink pansy.
•Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Semiminiature.

Jolly Gold Star
•(11209) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble white ruffled star/yellow eye, rays.
•Medium green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Jolly Muffet
•(11210) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble rose pansy/darker eye.
•Dark green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Jolly Pet
•(11211) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Single dark purple sticktite pansy.
•Dark green, wavy, serrated. •Semiminiature.

Misty Magic
•(11212) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Single-semidouble pink pansy.
•Medium green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Ruby Blush
•(11213) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble ruby-red pansy.
•Medium green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Sassy Jewel
•(11214) 05/21/2019 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble lavender-purple two-tone pansy/random darker edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, plain.
•Miniature.

Marjorie Bullard, the Woman Behind the Camera

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Once upon a time, the *African Violet Magazine* was the only reliable way to see excellent color photos of violets. Beginning in the late 1990s, technology offered new digital options. AVSA took advantage, led by a team of loyal AVSA volunteers, including Marjorie Bullard.

AVSA's first website began under the direction of then-webmaster James Rubottom. Marjorie, who already loved taking photos, was there learning and asking questions, hoping to submit some of her photos for use. "James was really very exacting and had high standards. He was very patient with me and explained some of the basics of photography and what I was doing wrong. I really appreciated his honesty and his patience..." she says. When Jim Owens later became webmaster, he developed a photo library that became a huge draw to Internet surfers. Pictures were the way to the future and Marjorie was determined to help.

In 2002, Joe Bruns, the Chairman of the Plant Registration and Master Plant List, released First Class, the software program listing all registered African violets in a searchable database. The paper records dating back to 1948 included no photographs. It was a Herculean effort to find photos of violets registered in those first 54 years! Marjorie, one of the beta testers, began the task by scanning more than 30 years' worth of photos from the *African Violet Magazine* before beginning to take photos on her own.

Growing and Photographing African Violets

Marjorie is modest about her photography: "I do feel many times like I am 'faking it'; I definitely am not a great photographer and operate more in the 'take a whole lot and maybe some of them will work' mode." She particularly respects the work of Winston Goretsky of the AVSA Editorial Board and Tom Glembocki of the AVSA Library Committee.

Pictures were the way to the future and Marjorie was determined to help.

Her interest in African violets began in 1993. "I purchased some at a local nursery. One of the workers there gave me the information about the local club in Corpus Christi and I immediately joined. I really dove into growing violets and expanded my collection to six stands in a two-bedroom apartment.... At one point I had close to 1,000 violets," Marjorie says. "In addition to our Corpus Christi shows and sales, I attended shows in surrounding cities. I was fortunate to live within a 250-mile radius of San Antonio, Austin, Victoria, and Houston... . I loved taking photos of the

Marjorie photographing in the show room at the 2019 AVSA National Convention. Photo by Joyce Stork.

different shows I attended. I cannot remember the name of the camera I had, but I definitely remember that it went through a LOT of film."

Ness' Candy Pink, Best in Show, Lone Star African Violet Council, 2005.

Along Came a Digital Camera

And then she got her first digital camera. "You could take as many as you wanted without it being so horribly expensive. I LOVED it! Now I cringe at the size and quality of the photos — but in 2000 it was cutting edge."

Things started to come together when Marjorie was asked to be editor of the Lone Star African Violet Council newsletter. "This gave me a fantastic opportunity to use some of the photos I had been taking, and a chance to do organizing, layout, and several other things that I really enjoyed. An unexpected side effect was that I had to interact with people, which is not something I was prepared to enjoy. I was appointed as editor in 2000 and served until 2017."

About the same time, Anne Nicholas, then chair of the AVSA Library Committee, asked Marjorie to do the photos for the annual convention design division slide show. "The first show I remember taking design photos for was in 2001 in Chicago, with my awesome Sony Mavica with 50,000 photos."

Marjorie steadily invested in updated equipment and today she uses a Canon PowerShot SX280HS, which she loves. "Taking pictures and uploading them has changed, but the basics are the same. I attend as many shows as possible, so I must make sure to name files carefully and save by show. I find most of my motives are selfish. I used violets to justify my computer, camera and photography equipment purchases. It really is so funny that I was able to do this because I am not even close to a pro photographer!"

Yesterday's Child, Best Trailer, AVSA, 2008. Photo by Marjorie Bullard.

Providing Plant Photos

Marjorie has never forgotten that AVSA needs photos for First Class and for the website. "All the photos I submit are from shows I have attended. It was always a challenge to find a photo [of a plant] that was not represented in First Class or the AVSA website, and to be able to send it to Joe or Jim."

When asked about the challenges of the job, she replied, "I think the greatest challenges have been waiting for computers and cameras to catch up to the needs. I simply cannot be thankful enough that the first dial-up network has been replaced by a beautifully speedy network and wireless," says Marjorie.

"A problem that always seems to continue is catching the colors correctly — especially anywhere in the blue range," she says. According to Marjorie, cameras, computers and monitors display colors quite differently and it has been an ongoing challenge to make sure the color is correct.

She continues, "I have always said that anyone may use my photos as long as they are using them in local clubs, or AVSA information, but not for personal gain. I have had some trouble with my pictures appearing on eBay with people utilizing them in their selling. This does bother me, and I do notify them and request they not be used."

A Body of Work

According to Joe Bruns, "In First Class, Marjorie is responsible for 6 percent of the photos. That doesn't sound like a lot, but it's more than 650 photos." And she was one member of a team, according to Joe. Janet Stromborg (deceased), Joan Baker, Anatoly Skryabin, Belinda Thibodeaux, Christel Collier, Iris Keating, Linda Rowe, and Tea Gallela have all contributed more than 200 photos each to First Class.

Currently, there are 11,961 varieties in First Class that still lack photographs. Is more help needed? Joe replies, "Absolutely. Also, sometimes we replace a photo with one that better represents the cultivar, or one that is of better quality."

For 50 years, the African violet registry was all words and paper. Today's registry is seen digitally in vivid color. Our appreciation must go to Marjorie Bullard and that early team of dedicated photographers. You changed our violet world for the better.

K's Slingshot, Best in Show, Commercial, AVSA, 2016. Photo by Marjorie Bullard.

AVSA Booster Fund

By Dianna Walston Kokomo, Indiana

Donations received from May 1 through June 18, 2019 Total: $318

Multicolor — $50-$99
Mosette Eibert, Red Bluff, CA

Two-Tone — $25-$49
Amy Cash-Allison, Somonauk, IL
Glenn Chamulak, Auburn Hills, MI
Ken Fortner, Lawrenceville, IL
Alice A. Inlow, Ballwin, MO
Donna Mosher, Grove City, OH
Janice Murray, New York, NY
Bettye Williams, Woodstock, GA

Thumbprint — Under $25
Karen Boswell, Port Hueneme, CA
Carla Hale, Germantown, OH
Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA
Jay Rohan, Gainesville, FL
Mary Vasconcelles, Springfield, IL
William Winslow, Seekonk, MA

Library Committee Update – 2019

By Penny Smith-Kerker, AVSA Library Committee Chair

Email: avsalibrarycomm@gmail.com

When I first joined the Library Committee, I wondered a bit about the name of the committee. Why was that the name? Was that really a good, descriptive name? The Wikipedia definition says that "A **library** is a curated collection of sources of information and similar resources, selected by experts and made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to material and may be a physical location or a virtual space, or both."

By that definition, the AVSA Library Committee is very aptly named. And just as our local public libraries have changed drastically over recent years, the library committee is working to update the way we provide information and resources to the AVSA community.

AVSA Programs

With so much information now available at our fingertips, it's a little difficult to remember the days when our clubs rented slideshow programs with written scripts from the AVSA office. Over the years, the library committee has changed their methods of providing resources. Most AVSA programs now are available on DVDs and thumb drives. But many of us have become very accustomed to downloading and streaming information; I hope we can eventually get to a place where AVSA members can purchase and download programs directly from the AVSA website.

The release of the "Perfectly Pittman" program last fall was very successful. If you haven't seen this program, I encourage you to get a copy! Our club really enjoyed watching this together. One of our recent efforts to provide new resources has been to work jointly with the Gesneriad Society to provide some of their webinars through the AVSA store. I must admit that response to these offerings has been rather low. If you have some feedback about these programs, new programs you would like to see created, or other ideas for the library committee, please let me know. I would appreciate your feedback.

The Library Committee and volunteers take a break from their showroom photography at the 2019 AVSA Convention. Pictured: Front (left to right): Committee members Richard Craft, Marjorie Bullard, Penny Smith-Kerker. Back row: (left to right): Anna Lammersen (2019 volunteer), Committee Members Tom Glembocki, Libby Glembocki, and Mel Grice; and Sarah Warhaftig (2019 volunteer).

Show Winner Updates

During the 2019 convention, we were able to provide "up to the minute" news on the AVSA social media channels about the winners of the 2019 show. I want to thank photographer Richard Craft, who prepared the photos with descriptions, and Kathleen McGinnis, Sally Wright and Karin Peters for their timely posts. It takes a lot of work and energy to make this happen the night the winners are announced.

The library committee was hard at work at convention, photographing as many plant and design exhibits as we could manage. We soon will have the 2019 show photographs documented on the AVSA website. Be watching for more information when the photos become available.

Shows and Judges Column

By Bill Foster, Chair Email: ibpfoster@sbcglobal.net
Mary Corondan, Vice Chair Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

What a beautiful show we had in Houston. Thanks to the exhibitors, judges, clerks and everyone who contributed to make it another nice convention. We can now look forward to 2020 in Little Rock.

Congratulations to those becoming Master Judges in October 2019. They are as follows: Linda Abplanalp, North Carolina; Margaret Califano, New York; Karen Cichocki, New Jersey; Elmer Godeny, Texas; Bob Kurzynski, New Jersey; Glen Shelton, Florida; and Barbara Stewart, Virginia.

Judges' List Online

Some changes have been made to the AVSA Judges' list posted on the avsa.org website. Previously, judges who had not earned the required blue ribbons have been allowed to take their test to renew their certificate and have been posted as a judge online. Taking the exam when the proof of blue ribbons is lacking was allowed, because there are fewer schools than there have been in the past. Judges who lack blue ribbons still will be allowed to take their exam to renew their certificate, but their name will not be posted online until they have sent Bill proof of having earned the blue ribbons (3610 Gray Dr., Mesquite, TX 75150).

It is important that proof of earning ribbons be forwarded as they are received. A separate list will be kept of those whose ribbons are pending. When the proof of ribbons has been received, the judge will be moved to the active Judges' list on the AVSA website (www.avsa.org/shows-judges) and will be eligible to accept judging invitations.

Sue Hoffmann will be keeping the Judges' list found on the AVSA website up to date. If you know of changes that need to be made, please contact her in one of the following ways: Sue Hoffmann, 2809 Forest Hills Ct., Virginia Beach, VA 23454-1236, home phone (757) 463-5383 or cell phone (757) 287-0858.

There is one change in the Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges.

Handbook Changes and Updates

There is one change in the *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges*. On page 42, between paragraphs three and four, insert the following paragraph: *Both the AVSA Convention show and AVSA affiliate shows must have three AVSA collection classes: standards, miniatures and semiminiatures, and species. In an AVSA Convention show, all three collection classes must be in both the amateur and commercial divisions. If an AVSA affiliate show has a commercial division, it must have all three of these collection classes.*

A list of updates for the 2016 *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* is now located on the AVSA website. After entering the members-only section of the website, click on Shows and Judges, and you will see a link for the "Updates for *2016 Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges*."

Judging and Rosette Notes

When judging AVSA Species Collections, be sure to use the Species Collection point score sheet. The scale of points used for species is different from the AVSA Standard Collection score sheet.

When ordering AVSA rosettes for the SSA/SSAA packet from the schedule approver, please note that effective January 1, 2020, the price is being increased from $5 to $6 for each rosette ordered.

Senior Judge Exams

For those of you who are Master Judges and would like to audit the Senior Judges exam, Barbara Werness will send a Senior Judges' exam and answer key to you at no cost after the October 1 deadline for returning the Senior Judges' test. Affiliates might consider reviewing the Senior Judges' exam as a possible educational program during the year.

Teaching Tools

Attention, teachers! Please print a copy of Teaching Tools from the website. There will be a few minor corrections that soon will be made to the publication. Once you print it, be sure to read it. You will find the official Roster Sheet in this publication. Make some copies of that sheet and use it. Follow the instructions stating what you need to send Bill upon completion of a Judging School. The instructions tell what must be on the Roster Sheet. It takes a great deal of time to process your school if Bill does not have this information and must take time to look it up.

Please read the Shows and Judges Column when it is published in the *African Violet Magazine*. This is where corrections to the *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* are published between printings.

Thanks to all of you for the contributions you make to this wonderful society. The next time you are at the convention, pause and just gaze for a moment. What you will see is everyone helping everyone!

CORRECTION: AVSA Rosettes

Although a change in price was approved for AVSA rosettes, it will not take effect until January 1, 2020. Further, the price increase applies only to rosettes, not to SSA packets (as printed incorrectly in the July/August 2019 inside cover):

Prices for AVSA Rosettes, Effective January 1, 2020:

An SSA Packet with no rosettes will remain $5. Beginning January 1, the rosette price will increase to $6 each.

Orders for rosettes must be specific as to which is needed: standard, species and mini/semi. They can be mixed in color and size, all for the same price. Through December 31, all rosettes are $5 each, added to the price of the SSA packet.

Tips and Techniques

- When putting leaves down, enclose the tray or the individual pot in a plastic bag for a week or two. Even covering the leaf tray with a piece of clear plastic wrap helps the cuttings to root more quickly.

- After potting up baby plantlets, keep your eye on them. Trim the baby leaves off so that the triangular form can be seen. This promotes growth to the "good" leaves and begins the symmetrical pattern we desire.

- When mixing your own soil, moisten the ingredients slightly and toss in a sealed heavy-duty plastic bag. Don't breathe that dust!

Coming Events

September 14-15 — California
Delta Gesneriad and African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Sacramento Garden and Art Center
3330 McKinley Blvd.
Sacramento, CA
Saturday: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Free admission for public

September 14 — Georgia
The African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta
Show and Plant Sale
North Decatur United Methodist Church
1523 Church Street
Decatur, GA
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sue Myers: 630-319-3155
Or message Facebook page:
The African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta

September 14-15 — Missouri
Gateway West Gesneriad Society
Show and Sale
Missouri Botanical Garden - Beaumont Room
4344 Shaw Blvd, St. Louis, MO
9 a.m.-5 p.m. (included with garden admission)
Linda: linda.mslavc@gmail.com
Martha: 314-406-4628
http://southerndays.info/gwgs/

September 21-22 — Minnesota
North Star African Violet Council
AVSA Judged Show and Plant Sale
Bachman's Floral, Gift & Garden
6010 Lyndale Ave. S.
Heritage Room
Minneapolis, MN
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Mary Kealy-Falk: mkealyfalk@aol.com
Club email: NSAVCTC@gmail.com

September 27-28 — Missouri
Heart of America Gesneriad Society
Judged Show and Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
5200 Pennsylvania Ave.
Kansas City, MO
Friday: 1-4 p.m. (plant sale only)
Saturday: 9 a.m-3 pm (show and sale)
Carol Brown: 618-210-5573
carol81843@yahoo.com

September 27-28 — Ohio
Ohio State African Violet Society
Annual Convention, Show and Sale
Kingwood Center Gardens
50 Trimble Rd., Mansfield, Ohio
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sales); 1-5 p.m. (show)
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (show and sale)
Free to public, fee for Kingwood Center admission
Mel Grice: 937-654-7014
melsgrice@earthlink.net
www.osavs.org

September 27-28 — Texas
Dallas Metro African Violet Societies
Fall Sale
North Haven Gardens
7700 Northaven Rd., Dallas, TX
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Workshops: 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Mary Corondan: 972-398-3478
mcorondan@yahoo.com

October 4 — Nebraska
Missouri Valley African Violet Council
Show, Sale and Judging School
Ramada Plaza, 3321 S 72nd St.
Omaha, NE
Friday: Judging School, 8 a.m.-finish; noon-4 p.m.
(show and sale)
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (show and sale)
Randy G. Deutsch: 605-321-0717
rcjsch@prodigy.net
www.MVAVC.org

October 5 — Michigan
Michigan State African Violet Society
Display and Sale
Matthaei Botanical Gardens
1800 Dixboro Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Lynn Allen: LynnAllen0413@comcast.net

October 5 — Pennsylvania
African Violet Society of Philadelphia
Annual Judged Show and Plant Sale
Cathedral Village Retirement Community
600 E Cathedral Rd.
Philadelphia, PA
11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Admission free
610-272-6961 or www.phillyvioletsorg

October 5 — Texas
Spring Branch African Violet Club
Annual Plant Sale
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Drive
Houston, TX
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Cynthia Severson: 281-682-1073
cseverson57@comcast.net

October 5 — Washington
Saintpaulia Society of Tacoma
64th Annual Show and Sale
Watson's Greenhouse, 6211 Pioneer Way East
Puyallup, WA
9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (sale); 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (show)
Jennifer Lambert: jlambert1@outlook.com

October 17-19 — New York
New York State African Violet Society
Annual Show and Convention
Hilton Garden Inn
74 State Street Auburn, NY
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday: 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
Penny Moore: 315-569-7526
penny.moore.bs@gmail.com

October 18-19 — Minnesota
African Violet Society of Minnesota
African Violet Display and Sale
Northtown Mall, 398 Northtown Dr. NE, Blaine, MN
Friday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Jude Neumann: 651-433-2708
Kathy Lahti: 320-274-1157
http://sites.google.com/site/avsminnesota

October 19-20 — Louisiana
Sundowners African Violet Society of Louisiana
Judged Flower Show and Sale
Baton Rouge Garden Center
7950 Independence Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA
Saturday: 1-5 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Laura Moser: Philipmoser@aol.com
Robbie McMeel: rmcmeel@bellsouth.net
Free Admission

October 26 — Missouri
African Violet Club of Greater Kansas City
Show and Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
51st and Wornall
Kansas City, MO
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Lynn Canning: lcanning@sbcglobal.net

October 26 — Texas
First Austin African Violet Society
Fall Plant Sale
Austin Area Garden Center
Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Susan Kautz: 512-365-1818
gizzmo@austin.rr.com
www.faavs.org

October 31-November 2 — Texas
Lone Star African Violet Council
Convention, Show and Sale
Hilton Garden Inn Dallas/Allen
705 Central Expressway South
Allen, TX
Friday: 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. (sales); 2 p.m.-4:30 p.m. (show room)
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (sales)
8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (show room)
Mary Corondan: 972-398-3478
mcorondan@yahoo.com
www.lsavc.org

November 2-3 — New Jersey
TriState African Violet Council
57th Annual Show and Sale
Haggerty Education Center
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
53 East Hanover Ave.
Morristown, NJ
Saturday: 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Sunday: 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Linda LoPresti: lindalop@yahoo.com

November 2- 3 — Wisconsin
Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs
Annual Judged Show and Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall
531 Knapp St., Oshkosh, WI
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kevin Degner: 920-426-3764
kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net
Free admission and parking

November 6-9 — Florida
African Violet Council of Florida
Convention, Show and Sale
Lexington Hotel
1515 Prudential Dr.
Jacksonville, FL
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sales); 1-5:30 p.m. (show)
Saturday: 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (sales)
10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (show)
Sharon Gartner: 904-536-4182
svioletlady@yahoo.com
DAVS.org

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

By Susan Hapner St. Louis, Missouri

Donations received from May 1, 2019, through June 30, 2019 Total: $393

Multicolor — $50-$99
Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society
In lieu of speaker's fee for Brian Connor
Johnnie Shepard

Two-Tone — $25-$49
AVS of Minnesota
In memory of David Neumann, husband of Jude Neumann
Donna Becker
Lorene Connel
Randy McMahill
Barbara Werness
In memory of David Neumann, husband of Jude Neumann
Betty Williams

Thumbprint — Under $25
AVS of Burlington Country
In lieu of judging fees for Judy Smith, David Tooker, Stephanie Griffith, Bob Kurzynski
Karen Boswell
Stan Kaugh
Joy Kohan
Edith M. Martin
Patricia Miklica
John Patterson
Carol Smith

Article Contest Update

By Pat Hancock

Congratulations to the winners of the 2018 to 2019 Article Contest! The new contest is under way and a winner will be chosen from each *AVM* issue. At the end of the year, we will choose three winners from among the issue winners for our top prizes.

Our First Winner

Congratulations to Geraldine Silva, the first winner of 2019 to 2020, for her article "Handy Tips for African Violet Lovers" that appeared on page 52 of the July/August 2019 issue. Her trailer will be on the way to her as soon as weather allows.

Many thanks to our new judges, who have adapted to this "monthly" system to provide timely awards for our winners:
Sue Hoffman, Leader
Lynn Lombard
Linda Lloyd
Barb Werness
Diane Miller
Sharon Gartner

Contest Entrants and Topics Open

This year, the contest is open to non-members, and Joyce Stork and marketing committee members have been encouraging all friends of AVSA on social media (such as Facebook groups) to spread the word to others who might write about their experiences growing African violets. We have some writing prompts to spark ideas (see page 25) but welcome all topics related to growing our plants. Here are the end-of-year prizes:

The 1st Place Winner will receive one free year of AVSA membership (6 issues of AVM) and 32 leaves or starts.

The 2nd place winner will receive 6 free months of AVSA membership (3 issues of AVM) and 16 leaves or starts.

Congratulations to Geraldine Silva, the first winner of 2019 to 2020 ...

The 3rd Place winner will receive 6 free months of AVSA membership (3 issues of AVM) and 8 leaves or starts.

I want to thank all the hybridizers and friends donating leaves this year:
Kathy Hajner — K's Violets
Joan Baker — Rivermist Violets
Linda Abplanalp — Carolina Violets
Steve Covolo — Steffano's Violets and Streps
Jay Sespico — Jay's *Sinningia speciosa*
Linda Hall — wasps and bustlebacks
Pat Hancock — Buckeye Violets and Morgan's Violets

This year's contest runs through March 1, 2020. I am looking forward to reading lots of new, interesting articles in our magazine. It really is ***our*** magazine and will only be as good as we help make it.

P.S. Thanks for all who sent cards after my fall — I am doing great!

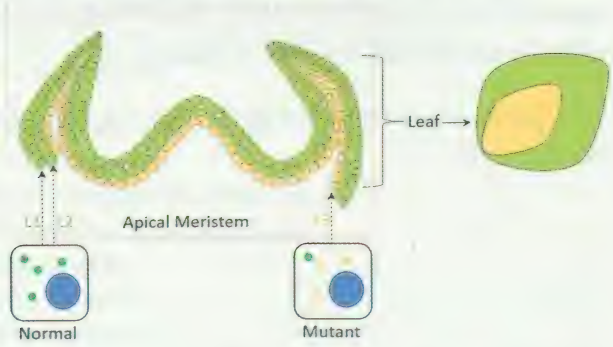
Contest Entry —

Chimera Lost and Found

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

When we think of African violet chimeras, the first thoughts that come to mind are pinwheel-patterned flowers that come at a hefty price because of the time, effort and patience required to propagate the plants. However, there's another type of chimera that is slowly gaining some popularity: the leaf chimeras.

One of the most popular, and the first leaf chimera in my collection, is Harmony's Little Stinker, which cannot be propagated traditionally by leaf, but by axillary shoots (or suckers). I purchased the plant almost two years ago but experienced a mite infestation, which destroyed the crown after treatment. Although the plant survived and the mites were eradicated, the crown grew new leaves that lacked the chimera variegation. Though disappointed, I purchased another plant at this year's Houston convention (see the photo).



My new Harmony's Little Stinker (top left) and my older, reverted plant on top right. Bottom: Mutant cell layer designated in yellow.

... there's another type of chimera that is slowly gaining some popularity: the leaf chimeras.

Chimera sports and their parent plants have "nuclear" DNA that is genetically identical, and this type of DNA follows traditional inheritance when cross-hybridizing to generate new varieties. However, plants also contain chloroplasts, which are organelles that contain green pigment, are responsible for photosynthesis, and have their own set of DNA. Most chimeric leaf variegations are a result of spontaneous mutations within the chloroplasts' DNA, **not** the nuclear DNA. This is why chimeras must be propagated by nontraditional means with suckers or bloom stalks, as the tissue must contain the mutant chloroplasts/chromoplasts.

Development and physiology of a chimera depends on the cells at the apical meristem of the plant (*see the center of the diagram*). The three upper layers of the cells will give rise to new leaves or flowers, and are simply designated L1, L2 and L3. Many foliage chimeras, including Harmony's Little Stinker, are called periclinal chimeras because a layer of the cells has the mutation. In this case, Harmony's Little Stinker has a mutated lighter green L3 layer (*mutant cells having yellow chloroplasts, and mutant cell layer in the photo designated in yellow*), resulting in leaves with variegated centers.

The topic of African violet chimeras has been debated heavily for more than two decades. There are African violets with foliage variegation and floral patterns (such as fantasy blooms) that resemble a chimera, but are not truly a chimera because they propagate true from leaf cuttings and their traits can be inherited.

For a more in-depth explanation of chimeras, please refer to the article "Chimeras and Variegation: Patterns of Deceit" by Dr. Michael Marcotrigiano, which includes an interview with Dr. Ralph Robinson on the topic of African violet chimeras.

Editor's note: The article to which the author refers is in the August 1997 issue of HortScience, *a monthly journal from the American Society for Horticultural Science.*

Publish Your Ideas – and Maybe Win!

If you want to share your ideas and tips for growing, showing or hybridizing African violets, send them to the editor (editor@avsa.org) by the deadline for each issue (see inside front cover). Not sure what to write about? Here are a few ideas, just to get you thinking. However, all topics about growing our beloved plants are welcome.

- Do you grow minis or semiminis? How do they differ from growing standard African violets? What adjustments do you make when growing both?
- How do you handle leaf starts and babies for best success?
- Do you hybridize? How can you help hobby growers take the leap into hybridizing?
- How do you prepare plants for show? What are your tricks for transporting plants to a show; how about taking those new purchases from local or national shows back home?
- Do you have grooming tips or shortcuts to share?

And if you feel nervous about putting together an article, we also welcome short tip lists: maybe how and when you rotate plants on stands, repurposed household items you use as tools, or tricks to remembering when to water. You might have picked up a great idea from a local club member or presenter you think will benefit all of us.

The 2019 to 2020 article contest is under way (see page 23 for our first winner). If you want your article considered for the contest, just mark it as a Contest Entry. Learn more about the contest on our website: avsa.org/magazine.

Contest Entry —

Effect of Aspirin (Salicylic Acid) on African Violet Seed Germination

By Don Landek Strongsville, Ohio

Just like many members of the AVSA, I enjoy gardening and growing plants other than African violets. So, I might turn to the Internet to look for tips and tricks. Frequently, the search leads me to YouTube, where all too often fact and fantasy mix to provide a strange reality. You can find presentations on YouTube that show you how to propagate just about anything by sticking, soaking or dusting seeds, cuttings and leaves into potatoes, cinnamon, various jams, honey (and the list goes on and on).

Rarely is there a follow-up video showing the results or mature plants, which indicates to me the outcomes probably were not positive. More often than not, the owner of the YouTube video is more concerned about whether you subscribe or like the channel than in the outcomes of the sublimely odd presentation you've just witnessed.

One group of presentations that caught my attention discussed the use of dissolved "disprin" (in the United States, we call it aspirin) into water to enhance seed germination. Many of the presentations were not in English, and even if they were, presenters used the aspirin equivalent in their country. They placed the tablets in water and the water fizzed while dissolving. Some tablets had a red coating, giving the water a red tinge.

Some of the presenters using aspirin tablets never gave precise dosages, one tossing a tablet into a cup of water, while another placed it in a liter, and yet another in a gallon, of water. All the outcomes, however, were the same. The results shown were suspiciously good, like 100 percent germination for the aspirin water and no growth at all when regular water was used. Really?! Seeds germinated faster and were bigger; cuttings rooted; it was like magic. And it always worked! It has to be true because it is on YouTube, right?

I decided to try an essentially comparable experiment to the YouTube demonstrations with African violet seeds ...

You might be asking by now: So, what does all of this have to do with African violets?

Testing Germination

I decided to try an essentially comparable experiment to the YouTube demonstrations with African violet seeds, but I wanted to make sure the only variable would be that one pot was watered with distilled water and the other pot with distilled water with dissolved aspirin. I controlled all the rest of the variables, such as soil, temperature, lighting and type of pot, for the duration of the test. I set this up so it can be replicated and modified in an organized manner (unlike the YouTube versions) by anyone interested in trying this, and in a manner that could benefit us all.

- **Pots.** I used two containers with 150 mL (about 4 oz) capacity. I drilled five holes in the bottom of each of the two pots in an identical fashion.
- **Seeds and mix.** I purchased seeds from Nadeau African Violet Seeds. I also purchased the germination potting mix from Nadeau. I split the soil mix between the two pots, placing 24.5 g (0.86 oz) into each pot.

•**Solutions.** For my aspirin water, I dissolved one 325-mg aspirin tablet into 1 liter of distilled water. This is a slow process because aspirin does not dissolve readily in water; I would suggest crushing the tablet between two tablespoons to facilitate the process. The other pot would be watered with distilled water only.

•**Wetting the soil.** I used two standard zip-top sandwich bags measuring 6 1/2 x 5 7/8 inches and placed 100 mL of watering solution into each bag. I then inserted the pot with the soil into the bag, sealed it and waited 12 hours. One bag contained distilled water and the other bag contained the aspirin water solution. After 12 hours, the remaining water from the 100 mL was measured and 31 mL remained. In other words, each container absorbed exactly 69 mL of water or aspirin water. The remaining water and aspirin solutions were discarded from their respective bags, but I kept the pots inside the bags.

Plastic bags filled with equal amounts of distilled water (right) and water with dissolved aspirin (left).

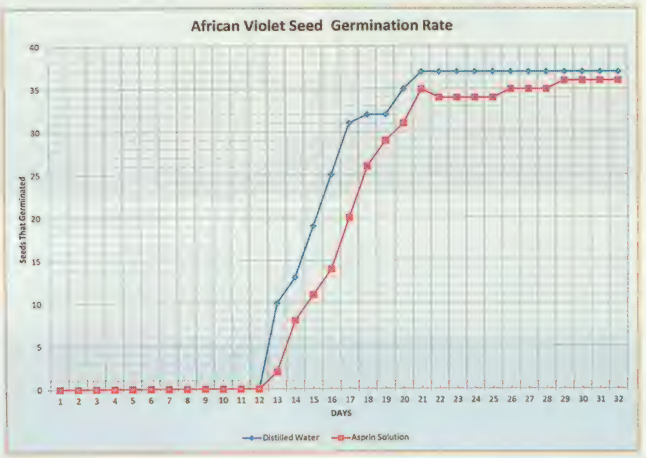
•**Planting the seeds.** I sowed 50 seeds into each pot.

•**Lighting and temperature.** I placed the two bagged pots under 40-watt T7 dual florescent lights at a distance of 12 inches and measured luminance at 4302 lux, using an excellent phone app for the measurement. I wanted to eliminate any variables in lighting differences, so each day I would move the bag with the pot so that the one on my right side was switched to the left side, and the left bag to the right. Temperature was 72 degrees F.

•**Germination.** I counted germinated seeds at approximately 7 p.m. each day for the duration of this test, which was 32 days. I counted a seed as sprouted only when both cotyledons were out of their seed coat and extended (with one exception; one seed that sprouted had only one cotyledon).

Results

The outcome was very interesting and even disappointing. Unlike the dramatic results one would expect after watching the YouTube demonstrations, the outcome was rather unremarkable. Actually, there was a very slight, but statistically meaningless result of better germination for the seeds watered with distilled water over those in the aspirin water. I found that of the 50 seeds planted in the container with distilled water, 37 seeds grew after 32 days, and of those 50 in the container with aspirin water, 36 seeds germinated by the 32-day mark.



Germination results for seeds in each water type.

The graph shows that aspirin water (red line) actually seemed to slow the initial germination rate over distilled water. Again, I was expecting a highly positive result with aspirin water, since I saw repeatedly on YouTube that every one of those aspirin water seeds grew with purpose.

Instead, I raised more questions than I answered. Do the aspirin levels need to be raised for positive results? Or perhaps they should be lowered? I only performed the experiment once; if I repeated the experiment would I get the same results? The questions on the specifics continue.

The only outcome I confirmed was affirmation that what you see on many YouTube channels is, well, entertaining and not necessarily helpful. Let's keep asking questions.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Lucky Snowflake

Exhibited by: The Violet Barn
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature
3rd Best African Violet in Show - Commercial, AVSA 2019

Photo Credit: Richard Craft

The Alps

Exhibited by Mary Corondan
Hybridized by: K. Horikoshi/ H. Sawara
Standard
Best The Alps - AVSA 2019

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Hunter's Momma Jo

Exhibited by: Ken Muzalewski
Hybridized by: K. Muzalewski
Standard

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Hunter's Whitetail Fawn

Exhibited by: Randy Deutsch
Hybridized by: K. Muzalewski
Standard

Tips on African Violet Hybridizing

By Dr. Jeff Smith Muncie, Indiana

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Dr. Smith for compiling content from his "In Search of New Violets" column into one helpful list of hybridizing tips.

Picking the Parents

1. Determine the goal of the cross. What are the traits that you desire in the offspring? It is a good idea to write the goal down so the offspring can be compared to the intended results. It will take about a year from making the cross until you see the results and it is easy to forget what you planned over that amount of time.
2. Plan the cross by choosing parents that will be able to provide the desired traits. Checking against the checklist of dominant/recessive traits will help in the planning and choosing of parents.
3. When in doubt on how a trait is inherited, choose parents that have strong foliage, good symmetry, a high bloom count and other desirable traits.
4. The seed parent plant should be healthy and disease free. Plants that are being groomed for show are not usually desirable because of the long-time commitment necessary from pollination to the maturation of the seed pod.

Pollination

1. Use pollen from a newly opened flower, preferably a single or semi-double flower type, as they have the best developed anthers for pollen.
2. The anthers should be firm and dry, and the pollen should appear powdery. Wet or mushy anthers rarely have viable pollen and should not be used.
3. The stigma of the pistil becomes receptive several days after the flower opens. Look for a wet shiny appearance as an indicator that the stigma is ready for pollination. The stigma may also spread apart slightly, indicating receptivity.
4. Pollinate several flowers on the same flower stalk. This should result in several seed pods, giving a better chance for the entire bloom stalk and seed pods to survive to maturity.
5. High humidity often helps in getting seed pods to set, especially if you live in a drier climate.
6. Label each cross, indicating the pollen parent and the date that the cross was made.

Pollinate several flowers on the same flower stalk.

Caring for the Seed Pods

1. The seed pods reach their full growth in one month. The size of the seed pod depends on the number of seeds they contain and the genetic inheritance of the seed plant.
2. Let the seed pod dry on the plant as long as possible. Seed pods that dry in less than 4 months are unlikely to contain fertile seed.
3. When the seed pod appears dry, remove it from the plant and place it in a warm, dry area for several days.
4. After drying, the seed pods can be planted immediately or stored. If you will not sow for a time, leave the seed in the seed pod. Place the seed pod into a small vial or container that is clearly labeled. You can store the seed for several years in a refrigerator.

Germinating the Seed

1. Seed must be germinated in a closed container with high humidity. Choose a clear dish or shallow bowl and cover the top with food wrap. You can use a rubber band to hold the food wrap in place. Other closed containers used for rooting leaves are also satisfactory.

2. The germination medium can be made of various materials. A fine grade of vermiculite mixed with some perlite works well. Your favorite soil mixture or leaf rooting mixture will also work in most cases, as long as there are no large pieces that might block seed growth.
3. Sterilizing the germination medium is a good idea to prevent fungal problems such as damping-off disease.
4. Break the seed pod open on a small sheet of paper that has been folded once to create a crease. The paper will allow you to see the seeds and the crease will give you some control in sowing the seeds onto the germination medium.
5. Viable seeds are very tiny and usually appear black and glossy. Seeds that are light brown or dull looking will seldom germinate.
6. Sow the seeds evenly onto the germination medium by gently tapping the paper. Adding some fine sand will help separate the seeds and prevent sowing the seeds too thickly.
7. DO NOT COVER THE SEEDS. They must remain on the germination medium's surface in order to grow.
8. Water the seeds gently with a mist bottle or with a fine spray. Use water only; fertilizer will stimulate the growth of algae that will choke out the seedlings.
9. Be sure that the container is labeled with the parentage of the seeds and the sowing date.
10. Place the seeds under a bright light. Bottom-heating the container also will stimulate seed germination. Placing the germination container over the ballasts of your lights often provides good bottom heating.
11. Viable seed should germinate within 7 to 28 days but some seeds may take longer. Look for tiny green specks to appear on the surface of the germination medium. Keep moist by misting when necessary to prevent drying.
12. Albino seedlings from variegated crosses might need a weak dose of nitrogen fertilizer to green them up. Pure white seedlings will not survive.

Moving the Seedlings

1. Let the seedlings grow large enough until they are comfortable for you to work with. There is no correct size for moving the seedlings into individual pots. Some people can work with seedlings as small as one-fourth inch in diameter while others prefer to wait until they are much larger.
2. Never handle a seedling by the stem. Always hold the plant by the leaves to prevent crushing the stem and killing it.
3. Pickle forks or notched flat sticks (such as those used in crafts) are excellent tools to handle seedlings. Place the stem in the notch or between the tines and gently lift the plant by the leaves.
4. Loosen the germination medium around the seedling before lifting it out. This prevents excessive damage to the roots, which can slow growth.
5. Pull each seedling apart from its neighbors before planting. Don't worry if all the germination medium comes off the roots. As long as some of the roots are intact, each plant should survive.
6. Pot up each seedling individually to allow the best growth and shaping of the new plant. Plastic bathroom cups work well as the first pots.
7. Seedlings don't require special soil mixes. Your regular potting mix will work fine as long as the soil particles are not too large in size and the soil mix has been sterilized.
8. Water the seedlings in with a warm spray or mist to help settle the roots into the soil mix.
9. Grow newly potted seedlings in covered containers until the roots are established.
10. Fertilize the seedlings with a weak balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20. Variegated seedlings might benefit from a higher nitrogen number until they have enough chlorophyll or green areas to support their early growth.
11. Keep newly potted seedlings close to the lights to stimulate early growth.

Seeds that are light brown or dull looking will seldom germinate.

Which Plants to Keep?

1. If you are looking for good show plants, keep the seedlings that have good symmetry and have leaves that overlap easily without gaps. Seedlings with poor symmetry will likely continue this problem unless it is caused by a culture break.

2. Watch for seedlings that have strong flower stalks and hold their blooms above the leaves. Avoid plants that tend to lay the blooms on top of the foliage.
3. Bud count is an inheritable trait. Seedlings that have five or more flowers on their first bloom stalks will likely produce more flowers than those with only two to three buds.
4. Discard any plants with flowers that are single droppers.
5. If you are selecting for miniatures, discard plants that quickly grow too large to remain in this size category. They will be difficult to keep small enough for show.
6. Look for plants that have unique characteristics or combinations of traits. Try not to keep duplicates of existing plants.
7. Unless you are breeding for trailers, avoid seedlings that seem to sucker frequently. It is unlikely that they will outgrow this condition.
8. Although your babies will be special to you, will they be special to anyone else? Be prepared to give away or compost 95 percent to 99 percent of the seedlings.
9. Be sure to keep good records for any seedlings that are kept, indicating their parentage and other useful horticultural notes.
10. Grow the seedling for three generations of leaf cuttings to check for genetic stability. Only consider plants that show good stability.
11. Register the best plants with the AVSA.

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received from May through June, 2019 Total $238

Geneva — $100-$499

Memphis African Violet Society
In memory of Iona Pair

Two-tone — $25-$49

First African Violet Society of Denton
In lieu of speaker's fee for Ken Muzalewski
Alice A. Inlow
Missouri Valley African Violet Council
In memory of Joan Watts
Bettye Williams

Thumbprint — Under $25

African Violet Club of Burlington County (NJ)
In lieu of judging fees for Paula Bal, Tim Ferguson, and Susan Hanna
Patricia Miklica
Joy Rohan

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Buckeye My Oh My

Exhibited by: Wayne Geeslin
Hybridized by: P. Hancock
Standard

Fiftieth Convention/First Convention: Impressions from Nancy Hayes and Patricia De La Torre

By Teresa Odle Email: editor@avsa.org

The camaraderie and level of involvement at the 2019 AVSA Annual Convention and Show in Houston impressed this first-time attendee. I was even more impressed when I heard we had a member who was attending her 50th convention: Nancy Hayes of Bloomfield, Connecticut.

Many AVSA members have never been able to attend a national meeting, and I had such a great time that I decided to talk with Nancy more about her dedication to attending AVSA conventions. I also talked with first-time attendee Patricia De La Torre for her impressions. Although their reasons for attendance and experiences were different, I found many common themes in how they described their convention experience.

Nancy Hayes Attends Her 50th Meeting

Nancy began growing African violets before she left for college; she took several of her violets with her to her dormitory at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, where she went to nursing school. At that time, maids came in to change the student nurses' sheets; inevitably, one would leave a window open and the cold would kill Nancy's violets. "My mother would soon show up with three more," says Nancy.

Nancy got her first taste of her love for AVSA meetings when the convention was held in nearby New York in the 1950s. She went along with members of her local club, the Windsor African Violet Society in Hartford, of which she still is a member. As her love of African violets, conventions and the people she met flourished, she managed to make a total of 50 meetings in 61 years.

That's a feat in itself, but consider this: Nancy also was married, working as a nurse and raising four children. And there's more. Although she has exhibited plants from time to time, she has spent more time getting involved in meetings and the AVSA. "I have been on the convention committee for 30 years," says Nancy. In addition to duties before and during the meeting, she served as convention photographer in Houston. At the 2019 AVSA Convention, Nancy also presented new variety plants and photos to convention attendees, a popular session.

Before retiring from nursing, Nancy worked in hospice care. Her most important job as a hospice nurse was caring for her husband, John, whom she had met all those years ago in Boston, and who died last fall. Although he was sick for more than a decade, Nancy managed to make a few meetings, thanks to his support of her violet life and the help of her children and friends. Today, Nancy's children live around the country, an opportunity for travel, especially when an AVSA convention is held near a family member or close friend.

Nancy at the 2019 AVSA Convention with one of her many friends, Dmitry Ozherelyev of Moscow. Photo by Neil Lipson.

Patricia De La Torre

Like Nancy, Patricia attended her first convention when it was held close to home. And, like Nancy, she attended with a friend from her local club, Spring

Branch African Violet Club in Houston. "I thought, 'How could I miss it with it being so close, and how fortunate I was,'" she says. She and her friend, Sam Cunningham, made a pact to attend together. "I had a blast at AVSA," says Patricia. Her friend, Sam, also had a great time, winning an award at his first show.

Patricia grew violets many years ago but paused her hobby when her daughter was born. About two-and-a-half years ago, she picked it up again. "I thought I would just get one of those lights you set on a table, that was all I was going to need," she says. "Of course, I just put my second stand together about two weeks ago," Patricia adds.

There were lots of convention highlights for Patricia, including a meeting for first-time attendees, where she met other people appearing at their first convention. She also volunteered to help assemble the goody bags we all received at registration. Patricia attended several helpful presentations and enjoyed the show.

Any first-timer is in awe of the national sales room, and Patricia was no exception. She enjoyed the excitement of waiting in line and the shopping, of course. "It was unbelievable; I had never been to anything like this with so many violets and other plants," she says. Like many attendees, she planned to limit her purchases (to 4 plants) and ended up with lots more (about 15).

"The whole experience was worth it for me," Patricia says. "I am looking forward to going to Arkansas."

Patricia attending her first convention with fellow Spring Branch AV Club member Sam Cunningham. Photo by Candace Baldwin.

"The whole experience was worth it for me," Patricia says.

Making Lifelong Friends

Sure, Nancy and Patricia had different reasons for attending and individual experiences at the convention, but they shared several common bonds. First and foremost, both could not say enough about the people. According to Nancy, "It is an amazing group of people; I continue to say that after all these years." Nancy has formed plenty of friendships, from African violet friends who stayed with her and John on trips to New England, to people she visits regularly in Texas and other states.

At one of three conventions she attended that were held in St. Louis, Nancy also was making plans for the upcoming wedding of her daughter who lived in St. Louis. Local members took them on a shopping trip to the city's garment district. "We found the fabric for her gown and they shipped it to us," Nancy says.

Nancy has had many years in which to form close friendships, especially with her friend and regular roommate (and former AVSA President) Janet Riemer. But Patricia, attending for the first time, felt just as strongly about the welcoming African violet community. "I can't get over how nice everyone is, from the hybridizers down to regular attendees like me."

Getting Involved

Another highlight for first-time attendee Patricia is her involvement, which she plans to increase at the 2020 meeting. That might include exhibiting a few plants. "I was too bashful about entering any plants," she says. But after seeing the show, she actually felt less intimidated. She also hopes to volunteer as a judge's clerk at a future meeting.

As for Nancy, being on the convention committee keeps her plenty busy at meetings. "Very quickly, people grabbed me to be involved on committees'" she says. She has served her local club and AVSA in a

number of roles, such as AVSA Treasurer, and the Membership committee. She also created the first few years of AVSA calendars.

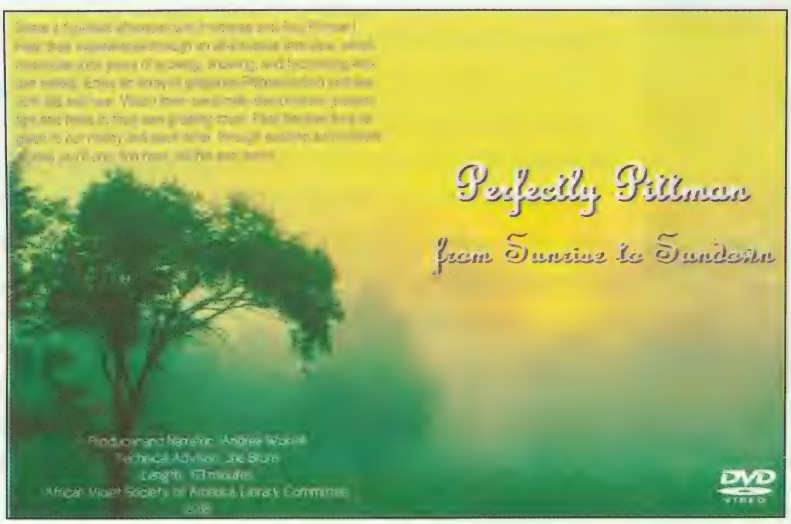
"Most recently, I was Secretary for about six to eight years," she says. In 2001, she received an AVSA Distinguished Service Certificate and was inducted into the AVSA Hall of Fame in 2016. Nancy says, "I think you have to be a certain kind of person to get involved, but once you do, you are in it for life." She continues to be amazed at how willing everyone is to help.

Patricia agrees, adding: "It is important to participate; you miss out on a lot when you don't. Even if you can't stay for an entire meeting, go for as long as you can."

In the AVSA Store

"Perfectly Pittman" Video

This hour-long video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman. It's perfect for anyone who loves African violets and streps - or any flowers - and for AVSA members who have known this treasured couple of the violet world.



AVAILABLE on the AVSA WEBSITE. DVD and Thumbdrive format $20

The AVSA Library Committee gives special thanks to Andrea Worrell and Joe Bruns for the countless hours they volunteered to make this video possible.

Hosted by the Central Arkansas African Violet Society

WELCOME TO ARKANSAS!!!

African Violet Society of America
74th Annual Convention & Show
"Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas"
May 24–31, 2020

Show & Salesrooms Open To The Public
Friday May 29, 9am–5pm / Saturday May 30, 9am–3pm

Little Rock Marriott Hotel • 3 Statehouse Plaza, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

2020 Annual Convention: Meet Us in Little Rock!

By Danny Tidwell Little Rock, Arkansas

The Central Arkansas African Violet Society will be hosting AVSA's 74th Annual Convention Show and Sale in the great state of Arkansas, in our capital city of Little Rock. These festivities and our violet family reunion will take place at the downtown Marriot Hotel located on the banks of the beautiful Arkansas river. The dates are May 24 through May 31, 2020, so mark your calendars.

Sculptures line a walking path along the River Market near the Marriott hotel. Photo courtesy of Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Near Our Hotel

The Marriot Hotel is located in the heart of downtown Little Rock in the River Market area. There are numerous restaurants, pubs and shops, all within walking distance of the hotel and mostly within one to three blocks; if you want, just jump on the trolley to get there. Saturday will be hopping with activity at the farmers' market just down the sidewalk, where you are sure to find some treasures.

In North Little Rock, just across the river, is a little place called the Old Mill; it is a re-creation of an 1880s water-powered gristmill. The landscaping and water features of The Old Mill are a sight to see. I bet you didn't know that some of the opening scenes from a little old movie called "Gone with the Wind" were filmed here.

P. Allen Smith, a man some of you might be familiar with as the host of three different television shows ("P. Allen Smith's Garden Home," "P. Allen Smith's Garden to Table," and "The Garden Style"), is known as a leading gardening and design expert. He occasionally offers presentations on these topics and tours of his farm, which usually include a meal that feature items fresh from his garden.

A Short Drive to Hot Springs — and a Hot Bath!

Hot Springs, known as the Spa City, is located just about an hour from Little Rock. Hot Springs is known worldwide for its Victorian style bathhouses that were completed around 1888; they still are in operation. The bathhouses have tapped into the natural hot springs that come from the ground at about 143 degrees F.

Bathhouse Row in Hot Springs has historic bathhouses and shopping. Photo courtesy of Hot Springs National Park.

Hot Springs also was a popular hangout for some pretty famous gangsters in the 1930s: names such as

Al Capone, Frank Castello, Bugs Moran, Lucky Luciano and many more. You can learn more about them at the Gangster Museum located on bathhouse row, which also is a great place to shop.

Diamonds, Anyone?

Crater of Diamonds State Park is one of the only places in the world where the public can search for real diamonds in their original volcanic source. Crater of Diamonds brings people from all over the world to Murfreesboro, Arkansas. Visitors to the park search a 37-acre plowed field (once a volcanic crater) for a variety of rocks, minerals and gemstones. Any rock or mineral you find is yours to keep. At the park's visitor center, you can view real, uncut diamonds and interactive exhibits. More than 33,000 diamonds have been found by park visitors since the Crater of Diamonds became an Arkansas state park in 1972, including some notable finds.

These are just a few things that come to mind and there are soooo many more things to do in and around Little Rock.

We look forward to seeing each of you in Little Rock for the 2020 AVSA Convention as: "Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas."

Helpful Sites to Learn More

AVSA 2020 Convention page:
www.avsa.org/conventions-2020

Marriott Hotel, Little Rock:
(got to www.marriott.com and search for the Little Rock Marriott on 3 Statehouse Plaza)

Gangster Museum of America:
www.tgmoa.com

Old Mill:
http://nlrpr.org/parks/old_mill

Bathhouse Row in Hot Springs:
www.arkansas.com/articles/bathhouse-row

P. Allen Smith and Moss Mountain Farm:
https://pallensmith.com/the-farm/

Crater of Diamonds State Park:
www.arkansasstateparks.com/parks/crater-diamonds-state-park

Raffle Thank You

By Danny Tidwell

I would like to say a BIG thank you to everyone who donated items for the raffle/silent auction we held at the 2019 AVSA Convention in Houston and to everyone who purchased raffle tickets.

The raffle/auction was a great success, bringing in $3,220. The Central Arkansas African Violet Society and friends are busy planning for the 2020 Convention. The design schedule, tours, and program presenters are in the works and will be finalized soon. Be sure to get those show plants picked out and on schedule for convention!

Little Rock, 2020 Convention-Specific Show Awards

By Debbie McInnis, Retiring Awards Chair

Oh, yes! We will be going Hog Wild in Arkansas! Danny Tidwell, AVSA local Convention Chair; Kathy Bell, Co-Chair; Alice Brown, Show Chair; and Susan Hill, Show Co-Chair, already have plans well underway. These national conventions are always a joint effort. The fine people putting on the 2020 convention are from Arkansas, Arizona and Kansas. Their enthusiasm certainly showed at our Houston Convention. And so did you!

I'd like to take this time to first thank you all for your donations to the Awards Fund, and second, to introduce you to our new Awards Chair, Sharon Gartner. Thank you, Sharon, for taking on this very important and rewarding position with AVSA. You all were very generous toward our 2019 Convention Show in Houston, and I know you will be just as forthcoming with your generous donations toward our 2020 Convention Show in Little Rock.

The awards that we give are important because they encourage people to show their plants, and reward those who show for their hard work. We would especially like to invite those who are members residing in Arkansas' surrounding states to talk with your club members and donate one or two awards for this convention, which will be held in your area. All awards will be listed in the convention souvenir book. Many thanks to those members and affiliates who make our awards possible through their donations, and we encourage each of our AVSA members to consider giving an award.

To be part of this convention effort, please send your awards (payable in U.S. funds) to:

AVSA Office, Awards
1310 IH-10 S, Suite 100
Beaumont, TX 77707

I'd like to introduce you to our new Awards Chair, Sharon Gartner.

The deadline to be included on the January/February *AVM* Awards page is October 20, 2019. The deadline to be included in the Little Rock Souvenir book is April 11, 2020. Please include an email address or telephone contact. A donation form also is located on the AVSA convention web page.

Thank you to all who have donated already:

Amateur Collection Awards

Best Holtkamp Collection – $300 – Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
Second Best Holtkamp Collection – $200 – Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
Third Best Holtkamp Collection – $100 – Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
Best Russian Collection – $300 – Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)
Second Best Russian Collection – $200 – Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)
Third Best Russian Collection – $100 – Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)
Best Cajun's Collection – $250 – Dr. Minh Bui (MD)
Best Robinson Collection – $200 – The Violet Barn (NY)
Second Best Robinson Collection – $100 – The Violet Barn (NY)
Best Buckeye Collection – $300 – Pat Hancock (OH)
Second Best Buckeye Collection – $200 – Pat Hancock (OH)

Best Lyon's Collection – $200 –
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses (NY)
Second Best Lyon's Collection – $100 –
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse (NY)
Best Texas Hybridized Standard Collection – $50 –
Bill Foster (TX)

Specific Variety Awards – Amateur Division

Best Aca's Libbie – $25 – Bluebird Greenhouse (NC)
Best Concord – $100 – Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
Best The Alps – $100 – Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
Best Cabbage Patch – $25 – Terri Post (IA)
Best Buckeye Seductress – $50 – Pat Hancock (OH)
Best Maas' Janet – $25 – Janet Riemer (NJ)
Best Kent Stork Smooch Me – $100 –
Missouri Valley African Violet Council
Best LE-Karusel – $25 – Starz 'N Streps (SC)
Best Lela Marie – $50 – Early Bird Violet Club (AL)
Best Lonestar Helen Mahr – $25 –
Richard and Anne Nicholas (TX)
Best Lonestar Lady – $25 –
Richard and Anne Nicholas (TX)
Best Lonestar Snowstorm – $25 –
Tom and Marge Savage (TX)
Best Lyon's Rockin' Romance – $25 –
Cathleen Graves (WA)
Best Marching Band – $20 – Karyn Cichocki in
Memory of Kent Stork (NJ)
Best Ozark Sinningia – $35 – Dave's Violets (MO)
Best Rodeo Country – $100 –
Spring Branch AV Club (TX)
Best Sailor Boy – $25 – Debbie and Mike McInnis in
Honor of Judy Carter (IN)
Best Wrangler's Spanish Cavalier – $25 –
Bluebird Greenhouse (NC)

This listing includes only Specific Variety and Collection Awards. For all current awards, go to www.avsa.org. A full awards list will appear in the January/February issue of *African Violet Magazine*.

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Karen Broadway Glendale, Arizona

Donations received from April 24 through June 18, 2019 Total $203

Multicolor — $50-$99

Southern New Jersey AVC, Egg Harbor Township, NJ
On behalf of Stephanie Griffith

Two-Tone — $25-$49

Alice A. Inlow, Ballwin MO
Susan E. Joy, Pickerington, OH
Emilia Rykowski, Clifton, NJ
Bettye Williams, Woodstock, GA

Thumbprint — Under $25

Karen Boswell, Port Hueneme, CA
Edith M. Martin, Cave Junction, OR
Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA
Joy Rohan, Gainesville, FL
April Van Ness, Trenton, NJ

Contest Entry —

Buffalo, Houston, and Beyond

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

It was a bit over a year ago when I started the journey by attending and exhibiting at my first African violet show in Buffalo. I remember the angst, being intimidated as I saw people come in with plants, and thinking I should not be here because I am not of the same caliber. However, I continued brushing my plants and stayed focused on getting my entries in after the seven-hour drive. I ended up doing better than I anticipated, which helped my confidence.

Brushing my plants while entering the 2018 national show. Photo courtesy of Richard Craft.

Starting Locally

I next exhibited at the Mid-Atlantic AV Society's show in Hershey, Pennsylvania, in November 2018. I was still testing the waters, but unlike in Buffalo, I wanted to exhibit as many plants or designs as I could transport, including those I knew would earn red ribbons. I was yearning for the judges' comments on the cards to fill in as a substitute for not having an African violet mentor. It was at this show where I received my training to become a judge through Sue Hoffmann, who I consider my mentor today. Since becoming a student judge, I have judged two shows and am hoping to judge many more. Local or regional clubs looking for judges, please keep me in mind (I will pay all travel and lodging expenses; they will not be at the club's expense.)

> Diversity is our strength; our differences make our organization exciting ...

Six months after regionals in May 2019, I exhibited with my local Baltimore African Violet Club (BAVC) for the first time. It was the first show I attended where every club member worked together to put on a fantastic show. I have never experienced such great teamwork and was so proud to be a member of BAVC, and what a pleasure and honor it was to exhibit and design alongside other members such as Marie Burns, Rodney Barnett and Karen Foster.

Second National Show

The national show in Houston was when everything came full circle. I brought two plants on the plane from Baltimore, Cajun's McKenna Trail and Kentucky Red Devil. I wanted Houston to be a different experience than Buffalo. I forced myself to interact and enjoy the convention with as many AVSA members and African violet enthusiasts as I could. I made so many new friends at this convention, one of whom was Belinda Thibodeaux. After meeting Belinda and seeing how talented and passionate she is about hybridizing, I decided to sponsor a "Best Cajun's Collection" for the next three national shows, so I started growing those Cajun's! In addition, I was awarded the President's Citation Award for 4th Best Contest Article and a Certificate of Appreciation for another article contribution.

Becoming friends with Belinda Thibodeaux.

Learning, Growing and Participating

My goal thus far has been to learn as much as I can from anyone willing to teach me, so I can be a better grower, exhibitor, judge and writer. The growth in the past year can only be described as exponential. I have been active in African violet groups, offering my perspective on multiple topics, such as the painter's tape approach to transporting plants to a show.

Testing painter's tape hold on two plants with a vertical 10-second test.

The number of plant clubs of which I am a member has grown from two to seven; the number of plant stands I have also has grown from two to seven; the number of rooms with plants from two to three; and the number of plants from about 200 to more like 400. Reflecting on the past year and meeting so many people, I realized how we all are very much a family, united by a common admiration for a family of plants.

To those who have and will continue to nurture, encourage and advise me and other new members, thank you!

As diverse as the African violets we grow, we come in all age ranges, shapes and sizes, races and ethnicities, religious and political affiliations, and orientation and gender identity, and adopt many different horticultural practices. Diversity is our strength; our differences make our organization exciting; and capitalizing on our diversity is how we carry AVSA into the future.

The proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" comes to mind after participating in four shows. I was the child and everyone in the AV community with whom I came in contact has helped raise me. To those who have and will continue to nurture, encourage and advise me and other new members, thank you! See you all in Little Rock, or possibly sooner!

Contest Entry —

Children and Violets

By Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama

I began growing African violets around fourth or fifth grade. Now that my nephew is three years old, I thought it was a good time to start teaching him about violets. He usually comes to visit on the weekends, and often likes to go into the plant room because that is also where I keep my guppy tank. He loves to wave to the fish and feed them with my help.

When in the Plant Room ...

I also show him the windows and plantstands. I point out the colors of the pretty violet flowers: blue, pink, red and white; he sees one he likes and says, "Purple!" I respond by saying "yes, that violet is purple and that is mommy's favorite color." One day, I was working with the fish tank when my nephew came in and started shaking the stand. I had one plant carefully balanced on a plastic butter tub for wick watering and it quickly slid off the shelf! I told him, "Now, uncle Josh needs to clean up the mess." I ushered him out and closed the door. This plant of Harmony's Miss Piggy had some spilled soil and several broken leaves. The pink flowers with fringed green edges also were bruised a little.

Regardless of child visitors to your plant room, it is important to have your plants placed securely on the shelf and not on wick watering containers that are too tall. Your violets shouldn't be teetering on the edge, because you might brush past and knock one over, or a pet could make it fall. Thankfully, Zoe the poodle is well behaved around the houseplants.

How to Show Your Plants to Children

It is best to keep your favorite plants out of the reach of small children and curious pets. I like to show my nephew the plants while I hold him. That way he can see them up close without damaging them.

Once, I made the mistake of throwing a small foam ball in the back bedroom with a plant tray sitting on the small teal nightstand in front of the window. There are blinds that shade the violets from direct sun and I wick water the plants with glass yogurt containers since I often forget to water them on schedule. I tossed the ball to my nephew and he bounced it back a few times, and then he bounced it right into my plant, Golden Autumn (a yellow Sorano hybrid). A few leaves were broken, but it will live. Lesson learned; ball playing and violets don't mix!

Now, uncle Josh needs to clean up the mess.

Remember to show your violets to youngsters, but if the plants are within reach, it might be best to show a child a NOID or one of the species plants first, since they are so tough. In that back room, I have a beautiful *S. ionantha* that grew from a cutting given by a generous friend in Birmingham. Some of the species like *S. ionantha* will bloom profusely and even thrive in less-than-optimal conditions. Even though they often sucker and are droppers, I still love growing them.

Moreover, setting your plants on shelves that are tall enough to be out of reach helps, along with using sturdy plastic or metal trays. If you need to prevent access to your plant room, try using a doorknob cover or locking the door. When a child reaches for a plant, make sure to explain to him that they are delicate and break easily. Also, remove plants from a room where small children are sleeping overnight. It is easier to prevent an accident than to clean it up afterward! In conclusion, don't be afraid to teach children about violets; just remember to take a few precautions first!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

***Primulina* 'Jade Moon'**

Exhibited by: Dolores Gibbs
Judges Special Award, 2019 AVSA

Photo Credit: Mel Grice

***Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Gingersnaps'**

Exhibited by: Dale Martens
Hybridized by: D. Martens
2019 Gesneriad Society Convention

And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: secondvp@avsa.org

AV & Gesneriad Society of Syracuse, NY — Winners:
•Best AVSA Collection: Ma's Arctic Sky, Rhapsodie Ingrid, Maggie Lee; Best Species: S. clone *ionanthus*, **Ann Kelly.**
•Best in Show/Best Standard: Optimara mySensation, **Lee Hoke.**
•Best Semiminiature: Mac's Misty Meadow; Best Miniature: Jolly Ace; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Bullata'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Donna Coleman.**
•Best Trailer: Broadway Star, **Shirley Mills.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Jane Feldman.**

AV & Gesneriad Society of Western New York — Winners:
•Best Species Collection: S. clone *confusa* Mather E, S. clone *orbicularis*, S. *teitensis*; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Species: S. *confusa* Mather E; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paul Kroll.**
•Best in Show/Best Standard: Edge of Darkness, **Nathan Cave.**
•Best Trailer: Ramblin' Lassie, **Gale Seerriter.**
•Best Design, **Laura Buckner.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Holly Pohl.**

AVS OF Springfield, PA — Winners:
•Best Species Collection: S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus* Mather No. 20, S. 8 clone *rupicolus*, S. clone *diplotrichus*; Best in Show/Best Species: S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus* Mather No. 20; Best Standard: New Year's Eve; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Smoke'; Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Jones.**
•Best Semiminiature: Persian Lace; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Cindy Castaldi.**
•Best Miniature: Precious Red, **Pam Orris.**
•Best Design, **Donna Biggs.**

Baltimore AVC, MD — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Stargate, Party Parasol, Amethyst; Best Trailer, Rob's Toorooka; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Minh Bui.**
•Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Star; Best Standard: Lovestruck; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Lace', **Marie Burns.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Karen Foster.**

Bay State AVS, MA— Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Wild Irish Rose, Buckeye Sentimental Reasons, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, **Nancy Manozzi.**
•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Cotton Candy, Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress, Buckeye Blue Indigo; Best Standard: Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress, **Christopher Paiva.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Jolly Butterfly, Jolly Frills; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Frills, **Eleanor MacIver.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Handmade, Cajun's Lil Joy, Rob's Outer Orbit; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Holly Walker.**
•Best Miniature: Toy Castle; Best Trailer: Chantaspring, **Janine O'Neil.**
•Best Species: S. clone *pendulus kizarae*, **Cynthia Brooks.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'My Precious', **Howard Kogan.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Carol Hess.**

Burbank and Montrose AV Societies, CA — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara EverHarmony, Optimara EverGlory, Optimara EverGrace; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Boondoggle, Rob's Kitten Caboodle, Jolly Dazzler; Best in Show/Best Standard: Optimara EverGrace; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Boondoggle; Best Miniature: Frosted Denim; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Little Red'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gay Wilson.**
•Best Species: S. 5h clone *rupicolus*, **Hanna Olson.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Luis Pineda.**

Columbus AVS, OH — Winners:
•Best in Show/Best Species: S. 5a clone *grandifolius* No. 237; Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; *Streptocarpus* 'Falling Stars', **John deSaavedra.**

•Best Semiminiature: Celina Velvet Ribbons, **Jeannie deSaavedra.**
•Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Trailer: Rob's Willawong; Design Sweepstakes, **Cathy Willis.**
•Best Design, **Gary Saunders.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Nancy Carr.**

Copper State AVC, AZ — Winners:
•Best Species Collection: S. 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker, S. clone 5c1 clone *tongwensis*, S 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Best Species: S. 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker, **Candace Baldwin.**
•Best in Show/Best Trailer: Sunrise Waltz; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Panther', **Meichele Juve.**
•Best Standard: The Alps; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Thelma Heinrich.**
•Best Semiminiature: Mac's Misty Meadow, **Richard Craft.**
•Best Miniature: Frosted Denim, **Anna Lammersen.**
•Best Design, **Susan Anderson.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Joyce Stork.**

Early Bird AVC, AL — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Floozie, Buckeye Seductress, Frozen in Time; Best Standard: Floozie, **Michael Jackson.**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Mel, Cajun's Lil Tizzy, Cajun's Lil Sprinkles; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Ramblin' Amethyst; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Mel; Best Miniature: Jolly Cupid; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Stephanie Newman.**
•Best Species: S. 5a clone *grandifolius* No. 299; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Waterbug', **Brenda Posey.**
•Best Design, **Donna Henderson.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Anita Goodall.**

Garden State AVC, NJ — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara EverGrace, Blushing Ivory, The King; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Persian Prince, Jolly Ruby; Best in Show/Best Species: S. 5c1 clone House of Amani; Best Standard: Optimara EverGrace; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Tim Ferguson.**
•Best Species Collection: S. 5h clone *rupicolus*, S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, S. 5 c1 clone House of Amani; Best Trailer: Scuba Diver; Best Design, **Grace Egan.**
•Best Semiminiature: Cajun's Le Bon Ton Roulé, **Paula Bal.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Spin Art', **Deborah Peterson.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Grace Rarich.**

Lakeshore AVS of Toronto, Ontario — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Eskimo Kisses, Mark, Mag's Lovely Rainbow; Best Standard: Eskimo Kisses, **Bruce Williams.**
•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Ma's Soap Bubbles, Optimara EverPrecious; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Combustible Pigeon, **Alla Kotava.**
•Best Species Collection: S. *shumensis*, S. *ionanthus*, S. clone *rupicolus*; Best Miniature: Mac's Elegant Emerald; Best Trailer: RS-Klad; Best Gesneriad: *Columnea microphylla*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Beverley Williams.**
•Best in Show/Best Gesneriad: S. clone *diplotrichus* Parker, **Bill Price.**
•Best Design, **Steven Kerr.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Karin Brockmueller.**

Memphis AVS, TN — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Colossal, Cajun's Hill Be Blue, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Rob's Ooey Gooey, Cajun's Lil Sprinkles; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Brenda Brasfield.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Deer Trail, Rob's Wooloomooloo, Rob's Galiwinku; Best Trailer: 23-Reka Enisei; Best Species: S. 5b clone *confusa*, **Cristy Boothe.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Inkblot' **Beth Baker.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Geneva Stagg.**

Metropolitan Saint Louis AV Council, MO — Winners:
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Coujon, Cajun's Roses Anyone, Ness' Candy Pink; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Outer Orbit, Rob's Kitten Caboodle, Rob's Shadow Magic; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Kitten Caboodle; Best Standard: Cajun's Coujon; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Best Trailer: Rob's Galiwinku, **Sue Melson.**
•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Omaha Thunder, Ness' Candy Pink, Optimara Michigan; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Roller Rink, Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Windsome; Best Species: S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, **Linda Sumski.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Queen Victoria', **Bonnie Russom.**
•Best Design, **Tara Ledet.**
•Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ron Masa.**
•Design Sweepstakes, **Fran Russom.**

Oshkosh AVS, WI — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Red Mount Fuji, The Alps, Ma's Wicked Witch; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Blue Clouds, Jolly Orchid, Rob's Love Bite; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Species: S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus*, **Kevin Degner.**

•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Clementine, Ode to Beauty, Kev's Blue Eyes; Best Standard: Rhapsodie Clementine, **Jerry VandeBerg.**

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Little Bountiful, Jolly Dear, Jolly Fire; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Aunt Georgie; Best Trailer: Hot Pink Bells, **Betsy Fox.**

•Best Species Collection: S. 5f clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, S. 6 clone Robertson, S. 5i clone *velutinus*, **Marty Anderson.**

•Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Thad's Gold Fever', **Cathy Heider.**

•Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Doug Kindschuh.**

Stampede City AVS, Alberta — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Seductress, Ma's Glass Slipper, Ma's Midnight Spell; Best Miniature: N-Robinson, **Melanie Duan.**

•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: LE-Kol'tsa aturna, EK-Zhemchuzhnyi Zefir, EK-Morskoi Volk, **Olga Magyar.**

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Gundaroo, Rob's Wooloomooloo, Rob's Boolaroo; Best AVSA Species Collection: S. 5c1 clone House of Amani, S. *ionanthus* subsp. *grandifolius*, S. 5b *rupicolus* Robertson, **Betty Fenerty.**

•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection; Rob's Outer Orbit, Ness' Angel Glitter, Rob's Kitten Caboodle; 2nd Best AVSA Species Collection: S. 5b clone *dificilis*, S. *ionanthus* subsp. *grandifolius*, S. 5b clone *confusa*; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Bashou; Best Species: S. 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Parker; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Norma Kunzel.**

•Best Standard: Funambule; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Outer Orbit, **Shane Morel.**

•Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia speciosa* seedling, **Winston Goretsky.**

Société des Saintpaulia de Montréal, Quebec — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Blue Spinner, Powwow, Ma's Mardi Gras, **Marie Gagnon.**

•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cherry Topping, Mirror Image, Optimara myLove; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Oolong, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cherry Topping; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Oolong; Best Miniature: Rob's Love Bite; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Annie Simard.**

•Best Species Collection: S. 5b clone *grotei* van Someren, S. 5h clone *rupicolus*, S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, **Pierre Laforest.**

•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Beca's Pink Crochet, Von's Elegance, Rob's Combustible Pigeon, **Danielle Gélinas.**

•Best Trailer: Tatoo, **Diane Pagé.**

•Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Starry Night', **Pierre-Luc Frigon.**

•Best Design, **Josée St-Pierre.**

Sweet Water AVS, NY — Winners:

•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Jersey Blue Moonlight, Buffalo Hunt; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cupid's Jewel, Jolly Devil, Classic Rock; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Loki'; Design Sweepstakes, **Carolyn Klein.**

•2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Unsung Heroes, Taffeta Blue, Funambule; Best Species Collection: S. *ionanthus* subsp. *ionanthus* var. *ionanthus*, S. 5b clone *confusa* Mather E, S. *ionanthus* subsp. *pendulus*; Best Standard: Funambule; Best Species: S. 5a *ionanthus* subsp. *grandifolius*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Jeanette Haynal.**

•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Creek, Optimara Little Aztec, Optimara Little Arapahoe; Best Design, **Marilyn Heinrich.**

•Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Mike Kelly.**

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress

Exhibited by: Kurt Jablonski
Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux
Standard

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Dean's Cupid

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: H. Hobbs
Semiminiature

Minutes of the Annual Meeting African Violet Society of America, Inc.

June 1, 2019 Houston, Texas

The Annual Business Meeting of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. was called to order by First Vice President, Sue Ramser, at 3:20 p.m. in Grand Ballrooms E, F, G, and H of the Houston Marriott Westchase, Houston, Texas. The invocation was given by Susan Anderson, who also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Sue Ramser introduced members of the African Violet Society of America Executive Committee, as well as Lee Woodward, Professional Registered Parliamentarian. Sue Ramser presented the President, Dr. Richard Nicholas.

Mary Corondan, Secretary, reported a quorum was present. She then read the Standing Rules for the Annual Meeting, and they were adopted.

President Nicholas appointed Candace Baldwin, Chair; David Kesler; and Sharon Shannon to serve as the Committee to approve the 2019 minutes.

Neil Lipson was appointed Timekeeper.

President Nicholas appointed Jeri Anderson, Chair; Paul Kroll; and Debbie McInnis as Tellers.

Susan Hill reported that the 2018 minutes of the Annual Business Meeting were approved.

Susan Hoffmann, Vice Chair of the Resolutions Committee, presented the Courtesy Resolution.

Candace Baldwin, Nominating Committee Chair, reported. The Nominating Committee submitted the following to serve as Directors until the conclusion of the 2022 Annual Meeting:
Stephen Covolo, California
Richard Craft, Nevada
Sharon Gartner, Florida
Jill Jensen, Nebraska
Mary Thompson, California

No nominations were received from the floor. Bill Foster made a motion that the nominations cease, and Joyce Stork seconded the motion. The directors were elected by voice vote.

Candace Baldwin further reported the submission of the following Officers to serve until the conclusion of the 2021 Annual Meeting:
President, Sue Ramser
First Vice President, Susan Anderson
Second Vice President, Mary Corondan
Third Vice President, Glenda Williams
Secretary, Douglas Allen
Treasurer, Terri Post

No nominations were received from the floor. Bill Foster made a motion that nominations cease, and Joyce Stork seconded the motion. The officers were elected by voice vote.

President Nicholas announced that the installation of the directors and officers would take place at the installation banquet that evening.

President Nicholas recognized the retiring Directors:
Johnnie Berry
Julie Jones
Lynn Lombard
Maureen Pratt
Dr. Bill Price

The retiring Committee Chairs were recognized by President Nicholas:
Candace Baldwin, Nominating
Karen Broadway, Boyce Edens Research Fund
Susan Hill, Society Awards
Debbie McInnis, Convention Show Awards
Tina Moreno, Violet Preservation
Cindi Nofziger, AVM Advertising

President Nicholas announced that Danny Tidwell and Kathy Bell will serve as Convention Chair and Assistant Convention Chair, respectively, for the 2020 Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas. Danny Tidwell extended the invitation from the Central Arkansas African Violet Society to host the 2020 Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, to be held May 24-31.

Mary Corondan, Secretary, read a list of deceased members from this past year as well as some deceased judges who may not have been announced in previous years.

President Nicholas gave an updated report on the progress of the sale of the AVSA office. The Board of Directors authorized the sale of the office and gave the Executive Committee authority to proceed. The building was repaired and put on the market. A temporary location for the office was found. Amy and the building contents were moved into the temporary facility. An offer has been made on the vacated office, and the offer was negotiated. The appraisal should happen on Monday or Tuesday of this coming week. If the appraisal works for the FHA loan and everything goes as planned, the closing date is set for June 13. The Executive Committee authorized President Nicholas to continue negotiations through the final paperwork rather than change the name on the final documents to the name of the incoming President. The search for a permanent location in Beaumont will continue.

A question was raised concerning the sale price of the AVSA office. The price is more than was originally asked. The current price is $139,900. After closing costs, AVSA should recoup $120,000 to $125,000. Money from the Funding Solutions fund was used to finance repairs on the building so the office could be put on the market. It also paid the deposit and first month's rent on the temporary office. The cost of operating the previous office was $1300 per month and the cost of the current leased building is $1500 per month. The building is being sold for more than AVSA paid for it.

Currently, there are no prospective permanent locations for the office being considered. The AVSA Office Manager, Amy Carruth, is not mobile; therefore, it is desirable for the office to remain in Beaumont. President Nicholas recognized those who were involved in the office packing and clean-up.

As there was no further business to come before the 2019 Annual Meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Submitted by Mary Corondan, Secretary

COMMITTEE TO APPROVE:
Candace Baldwin, Chair
David Kesler
Sharon Shannon

African Violet Magazine Article and Event Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

African Violet Society of America, Inc
Combined Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2018

ASSETS:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$ 55,245.03
Investments	106,701.18
Accounts Receivable	1,344.40
Inventories	10,398.06
Prepaid Expenses	5,403.70
Restricted Assets:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	225,449.89
Investments	169,154.83
Capital Assets:	
Land	10,000.00
Other Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	25,900.90
TOTAL ASSETS	609,597.99
LIABILITIES:	
Accrued Payroll Taxes Payable	1,533.50
Sales Taxes Payable	136.51
Deferred Revenue	118,835.11
TOTAL LIABILITIES	120,505.12
NET ASSETS:	
Net Investment in Capital Assets	35,900.90
Temporarily Restricted	45,039.74
Permanently Restricted	352,548.68
Unrestricted	55,603.55
TOTAL NET ASSETS	$ 489,092.87

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Fuddy Duddy

Exhibited by: Mary Corondan
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature

Technically Speaking: Adjusting the Balance

By Neil Lipson

Email: ndlipson@gmail.com • (610) 356-6183

I grow my plants under strict conditions because of my experiments with respect to lighting, water, soil and environment. I need these close controls so I don't blame my fertilizer or soil for a problem that is caused by the water, for example.

Many growers have no idea how to adjust their fertilizer or how to check their soil. So, I placed a question on the Facebook page, African Violet Buddies, and was surprised to find out that most growers do not check their soil for pH. Some used pH strips, which have a lot of problems. I've outlined the issue below.

Most commercial soil mixes you can buy have an acceptable pH. But, over time, the organic parts break down into a more acidic composition. Of course, if you repot every three months, this is not a problem. Many growers repot much less often, however.

Fertilizers

In years past, only the normal N-P-K (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) fertilizers were available for violets; these had no added micronutrients. The pH meters were expensive, so the only solution for many growers was guessing what to do. But now, everything has changed because the price of pH meters has dropped and fertilizers often have micronutrients.

An example of a fertilizer with micronutrients is from Plant Marvel, which makes a 14-12-14 fertilizer with no urea, and a 5-50-17 (Bloom Booster) blooming formulation, both of which have micronutrients. Some growers have had a few problems with fertilizers that contain urea, which can burn the roots if applied in high concentrations.

As far as the amount of fertilizer to use, you must consider numerous factors, including humidity, whether you wick or top water, and the soil mix that you use. For example, when the humidity is low, the plants will get a higher level of fertilizer because of the increased amount of watering, so you will have to dilute the solution to adjust for this.

Water and pH

A lot of the other pH problems that growers deal with relate to the water they use for their plants, along with the type of soil mix. Tap water and well water need various corrections to adjust pH and reduce the excessive minerals in well water. Standardization is the key to keeping the variations to a minimum. Personally, I use the condensate water from my furnace or my air conditioner. I run it through a resin filter-type purifier to get the remaining impurities down to a very low parts per million (PPM), and then adjust the fertilizer to bring it up to the required amount.

The idea is to start with pure water, close to distilled, and then add the nutrients and micronutrients to make it perfect for the violets. When my water company makes occasional changes in the water for whatever reason, I don't have to worry. This method obviously doesn't work for those who live in warmer climates who heat and cool their homes with a heat pump system.

For many of you, regular condensate water is fine unless you're going to do some serious testing of soil, fertilizer and micronutrient combinations. Rainwater quality can depend on the atmospheric conditions and how the water is collected.

Measuring pH

Some growers look to save money by using pH strips for testing instead of a pH meter. The strips will give a reading of up to one pH value off of the correct value. To me, this is unacceptable for any serious grower; in reality, the result is a rough indicator only.

A pH meter is more accurate than strips.

If you use a pH meter, I recommend you do not store its tip in distilled water; this will wash out electrolytes that are in the glass bulb. If you have done this, simply soak the meter tip in a pH 4.0 storage solution to help revive the meter.

Soil Mixes

Over the years, I have seen soil mixes cause a lot of pH problems for African violet growers. One soil manufacturer used a local supplier only to save costs on shipping, but when I got samples from growers around the country, there was a huge variation in the pH and soil composition, depending on where the growers live. The manufacturers used the same exterior plastic bag, but upon inspection, the soils were very different.

In my opinion, one of several soil manufacturers with consistency in quality is PRO-MIX. When it comes in a bail, it can be diluted to adjust for various wick watering and humidity conditions. There is an art to adjusting the soil. For PRO-MIX, I use a sifter to filter out the large chunks and it makes repotting quite easy. The sifter is available on Amazon, and conveniently fits in a 5-gallon plastic bucket.

Another soil is Organic Mechanics Container Potting Blend, but keep in mind it packs a wallop during the first month or two. The mix contains worm castings and other organic matter that can release a higher amount of fertilizer and micronutrients. That can manifest itself as tight centers in African violets, for example.

Although I don't use this mix, I recommend diluting it down, using only about 25 percent to start with and adding the other 75 percent in perlite and another African violet mix. I also have heard of growers "washing" the soil to reduce this initial shock.

There is one tip when you repot, and that is to be careful that you do not fertilize for about 4 weeks to allow the extra nutrients to be used first, or your African violets might develop tight centers. Further, be sure to use a mix that is appropriate for your watering method.

This soil sifter fits perfectly on a 5-gallon bucket.

Conclusion

Remember that growing conditions vary from one grower to another and will change as the season changes. Try to standardize your growing to keep these parameters as stable as possible. And the most important suggestion is to keep your collection manageable by avoiding the urge to grow too many plants!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Primulina bipinnatifida

Exhibited by: Dolores Gibbs

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Sinningia
'Kevin Garnett'

Exhibited by: Mary Corondan

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

LE-Koster

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: E. Lebetskaia
Standard

AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson, Affiliate Chair

Email: affiliate@avsa.org

September is the month in which a lot of clubs get back to their normal monthly meetings. It's also the time of year that clubs discover that some members have not yet returned. This is the time to make that special effort to get in touch with those people. Sometimes, club members have just lost interest and moved on to other activities. But, if there is something about your club that has turned people off, now would be a good time to learn about the problem. Maybe they feel left out of the main group of members. How welcoming is your club to new members? Keep all of your members in the loop and be sure to ask all members to participate in meetings, sales and shows. It's not as much fun if the same people run everything and everyone else just becomes a spectator.

Website Updates

Most of the affiliate clubs have done a good job of updating their information on the AVSA website. However, there are still a number of clubs that never have updated their information. Please take a few minutes to see if your club has an updated date listed. If not, please take the time to update your information so AVSA knows your club is still active. Also, if you know of a club in your state that is no longer active, please send an email to me and to Amy Carruth in the AVSA office.

Remember that Tom Glembocki updated the Events page of the AVSA website so there is a special area to post Judging School information. When you enter in your event, the "Type of Event" will be Judging School. A PDF document of the information will be formed and posted in the Judging School area.

New Clubs Forming

The Little Egypt African Violet Society (LEAVS) of Illinois has become an AVSA affiliate. Welcome!

We have a long list of members working to start a club:

•Laura Carpenter, Lancaster, CA. Phone: 661-940-3990

•Jennifer Gaenzle, Fort Fairfield, ME. Email: ladyofthe forestnaturecenter@gmail.com

•John Geiser, Grand Rapids, MI. Email: johnrgeiser@gmail.com

•Susan Jacques, Marquette, MI. Email: susan @robert jacques.com

•Joanne Hawks, Greensboro, NC. Email: johawks21@gmail.com

•Vikki Ivey, Greenville, SC. Email: vivey@att.net

•Pam Brown, Buckhannon, WV. Email: psbrn0249@gmail.com

•Jennie Lawrence, Laramie, WY. Email: missjeannae@yahoo.com

How welcoming is your club to new members?

Hopefully, you know someone who will be interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact me for help. There are several states that do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.

Violet Club in Grand Junction, Colorado

By Sharon Dollar Grand Junction, Colorado

A few years ago, I joined the Western Colorado African Violet Society in Grand Junction. It has been a wonderful experience. We live in a valley with three very different mountains around us and the Colorado River flowing through. This part of western Colorado is high desert with lots of challenges for African violet growers. But our members have so much knowledge about the plants that they pass on with great joy and enthusiasm.

The photo shows our founding members, who generously support us with plants and advice. I have so many violets in my house that they have shared with me. And because of their input, the violets are looking healthy.

If you ever come to Colorado, please stop in and see us. We meet the third Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m. at the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens. All of us trade and share plants with one another. It is funny when we get together how the conversations can stray to all kinds of subjects. We have a lively group.

Debra Foster, founding member (left) and Flo Naylor, founder (right).

Plant Room Perils

As Told by Linda Lloyd

We reached out to members for stories of some of their fun, foibles (and perils!) while growing African violets that they were willing to share. Here's one from Linda Lloyd of Ohio:

I trapped myself in my plant room one day. My husband was out of town for the week and I decided to move a stand of plants from one room to another. I tried to "cut the corner" and got the stand wedged in the doorway and it wouldn't budge! I pushed and pulled for about an hour but it was at a really weird angle and I was getting nowhere.

I texted my daughters and told them if they didn't hear from me for a while to call and check on me when they got off work. I took all of the plants off of one of the shelves and found out that an old lady really could crawl through that tiny space and tumble out on the other side!

2019 Annual Convention Awards Houston, Texas

We published some of the top award winners from this year's convention in the July/August issue of *AVM* (see page 32.) Here are more of the top amateur and commercial awards. For a complete list of awards, including Specific Variety Awards, go to our website: www.avsa.org/2019-awards. And learn more about donating to the awards on page 40 of this issue.

Best Texas-hybridized Collection (Mini/Semimini)
Honey Berry, Cheers, Beginner's Luck
Kurt Jablonski, Miami Beach, FL

2nd Best Texas-hybridized Collection (Mini/Semimini)
Precious Red, Jolly Lilac, Texas Space Dust
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Holtkamp Memorial Collection
Optimara Little Blackfoot, Optimara Little Arapahoe, Optimara Little Omaha
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

2nd Best Holtkamp Memorial Collection
Optimara Little Aztec, Optimara Little Creek, Optimara Little Ottawa
Linda Sumski, Saint Louis, MO

3rd Best Holtkamp Memorial Collection
Optimara Louisiana II, Optimara Crater Lake II, Optimara myDelight
Belinda Thibodeaux, Patterson, LA

Best Robinson Collection
Rob's Suicidal Squirrel, Rob's Plaid Skirt, Rob's Slap Happy
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Buckeye Collection
Buckeye Nostalgia, Buckeye Extravaganza, Buckeye Sentimental Reasons
Wayne Geeslin, Sugar Land, TX

Best Russian/Ukrainian Collection
Vika, EK-Skarabei, LE-Koster
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Lyndon Lyon Collection
Heartbreak Kid, Lollipop Kid, Frosty Bubbles
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Standard African Violet
Buckeye Nostalgia
Wayne Geeslin, Sugar Land, TX

Best Miniature African Violet
Cajun's Lil Forever Blue
Mary Corondan, McKinney, TX

Best Semiminiature African Violet
Jazz Bouquet
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Trailer
Rob's Boolaroo
Sue Melson, de Soto, MO

Best Species
S. 5c1 clone *tongwensis* Uppsala 3397
Belinda Thibodeaux, Patterson, LA

Best New Cultivar — Amateur
Cajun's Blueprint
Belinda Thibodeaux, Patterson, LA

2nd Best New Cultivar — Amateur
Cajun's Bridal Show
Belinda Thibodeaux, Patterson, LA

3rd Best New Cultivar — Amateur
Hunter's Kashmir
Ken Muzalewski, Carrollton, TX

Best Vintage Violet
Mary Craig
Wayne Geeslin, Sugar Land, TX

Best Other Gesneriad
Chrysothemis pulchella 'Bronze'
Robert McMeel, Houma, LA

Best AVSA Standard Collection — Commercial
Cajun's Hot Expectations, Cajun's Beautiful Oblivion, Cajun's Fair Maiden
Glenda Williams, McDade, TX

Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection — Commercial
Spring Peach, Frosted Denim, Orchard's Bumble Magnet
Glenda Williams, McDade, TX

Best Other Gesneriad — Commercial
Nautilocalyx species
Kathryn Spissman, Tucker, GA

Best Design in Show
"In a Nutshell"
Anne Nicholas, Denton, TX

2nd Best Design in Show
"Technology"
Paul Kroll, Lancaster, NY

3rd Best Design in Show
"Dish Garden"
Dolores Gibbs, San Marcos, TX

Best Interpretive Plant Arrangement
"Rodeo"
Fran Russom, Saint Louis, MO

Best Interpretive Flower Arrangement
"In a Nutshell"
Anne Nicholas, Denton, TX

Best Container Garden
"Dish Garden"
Dolores Gibbs, San Marcos, TX

Education Exhibit
Dmitry Ozherelyev, Moscow, Russia
Susan Hill, Smith Center, Kansas

Horticulture Sweepstakes
79 blue ribbons
Debbie McInnis, Floyds Knobs, IN

Runner-Up to Horticulture Sweepstakes
42 blue ribbons
Mary Corondan, McKinney, TX

Design Sweepstakes
11 blue ribbons
Danny Tidwell, McRae, AR

In Memory

Iona Pair

Iona Pair of Memphis, Tennessee, passed away on March 21, 2019. She was 92 years old and was a member of the Memphis African Violet Society.

Iona was a long-time member of the Memphis AVS, as well as Dixie AVS and AVSA, all of which she supported since beginning to grow violets in the 1950s. She was a lady of many talents. She grew beautiful violets and was a wonderful designer, and she had the rosettes to prove it. In addition to her violet hobby, she was an excellent seamstress, making costumes for the cotton carnival and outfits for church choirs, cheerleaders and dance groups. Iona enjoyed painting, coin collecting, quilting, and for many years, sharing her knowledge of violets with everyone.

She served as president of the Memphis AVS seven times, was a master judge, and was an AVSA judging school instructor. Iona was dedicated to her church and served for years as our club chaplain, leading a devotional before each meeting. The club and the violet community have lost a good one.

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African Violet Magazine Advertising Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

Save the Wild Saintpaulia

Will the Wild African Violet Survive?

Wild Saintpaulia species are found only in a very limited habitat in a handful of mountain and coastal rainforests known by scientists as the Eastern Arc. Much of the Arc rainforests have been destroyed by man.

The African Rainforest Conservancy is preserving and regenerating the Saintpaulia habitat. You can play a critical role.

$50.00 - Contributor
$100.00 - Rafiki (Friend)
$250.00 - Ndugu (Comrade)
$500.00 - Bwana au Bibi (Patron)
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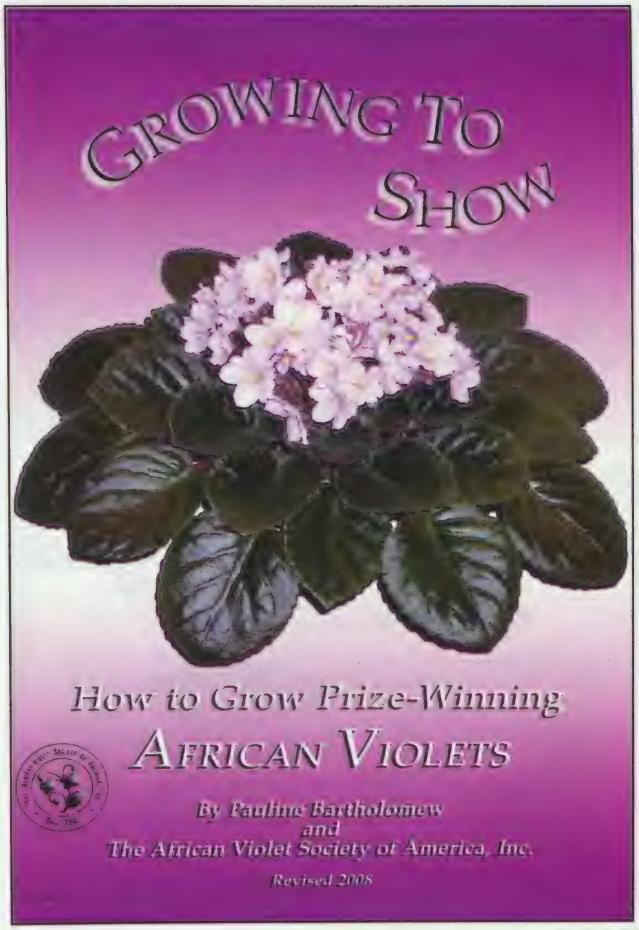

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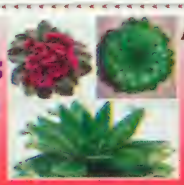

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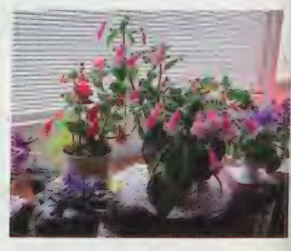

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African Violet MAGAZINE

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November • December 2019 Volume 72 Number 6 avsa.org

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African Violet Magazine

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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 72 Number 6

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Hybridized by: R. Kurzynski
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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By Sue Ramser

2413 Martin St. • Wichita Falls, TX 76308
Email: president@avsa.org

To our AVSA Friends:

As I write this column, fall weather has not yet arrived. As some of you read this issue of *AVM*, you probably have experienced a touch of winter weather.

Fall shows have occurred or just are occurring and you are preparing your plants for a long winter ahead. Congratulations to the winners of the fall shows. Now you will be looking ahead to preparing your plants for the spring shows and the AVSA Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas. More information about the 2020 Little Rock Convention on pages 52 and 53.

It is with sadness that we report the passing of important friends of AVSA. Bill Foster, a Past President and long-time Shows and Judges Chair, passed away on September 24. If you have not yet read Joyce Stork's profile of Bill in the March/April issue of *AVM*, please do so. Georgene Albrecht, a former columnist for *AVM*, passed away a few months ago. See Mel Grice's tribute to Georgene and her artwork on page 25.

Breaking News

As many of you know, we closed on the sale of our Beaumont office (see more below). However, in late September, we had an unexpected visitor — Tropical Storm Imelda. The storm dumped more than 30 inches of rain in a short time, flooding Beaumont and other areas east of Houston. Our new leased office is in an area of town that previously has not flooded. But more than a foot of rain poured in. Read more about the storm and our initial damage assessment on page 5. We are thankful Amy Carruth and her family are safe and that their home did not flood.

Office Funds

The funds from the sale of the office have been placed in an account to earn interest until a new property is located and purchased.

Thank you to all who donated to the Funding Solutions Campaign. Your donations helped make possible the office building sale and the move to our temporary office. We received a total of $22,302 in donations. Expenses of $8,319 including repairs to the old office (electrical update, plumbing and roof repairs), first month's rent and deposit on the new office, moving expenses and expenses for the new office (curtains, locks for sliding window, etc.) were incurred. This leaves a balance in the Funding Solutions account of $13,983. This amount will be available for future building-related expenses.

Tax Planning

As you are reviewing your end-of-year tax planning, please remember AVSA. The Society is a 501(c)3 organization and offers several giving opportunities: the Barbara Burde Fund, Booster Fund, Boyce Edens Research Fund, Building Maintenance Fund, Funding Solutions and the Tinari Endowment Fund. Donations can be sent to the AVSA Office or made online using PayPal or a credit card.

Projects and Volunteers

A number of projects are in progress; among these are online plant registration, online convention registration and updating of the AVSA website. Watch for future updates on these and other projects.

Your Executive Committee would like to thank all our volunteers who help your Society run efficiently. Without our volunteers, your Society could not accomplish the things we do. We would like to give a big round of applause to all those who volunteer countless hours for AVSA. **Thank you!**

Your Executive Committee would like to extend greetings to you for the holiday season. AVSA members are a resilient group and through our two-way **communication**, African Violets Continue to Connect Us!

Editor's Notes

By Teresa G. Odle

Email: editor@avsa.org

It's November already and time for final fall shows around the country before we break for the holidays. Before we know it, we'll all be planning for next year's National Convention in Little Rock!

This Issue

I want to thank everyone who submitted articles for this issue. We asked for some extra content on minis and semiminis and some of AVSA's top mini growers responded with articles or interviews. We also have some excellent contest entries on growing, including a few from authors of some of our most popular articles this year. I am excited about both the quantity and quality of articles we are receiving to help African violet growers at all levels.

Speaking of Quality

Our newest column, "My First Violets" from Sandra Skalski, appears for the second time in this issue. This month's column is all about soil. Watch for her column every other issue. I want to thank Sandra and all the volunteers who submit columns and reports every issue. It's an ongoing commitment, and we couldn't produce the magazine without your time and effort.

We also have a new/returning feature this month. AVSA's Past President, Dr. Richard Nicholas, has offered to occasionally write a Question and Answer article like those we've had in past years. He will answer questions, often with the help of fellow top growers, as they arise. I would love to see members share questions you have or excellent or common questions you hear from less-experienced growers in local clubs or on social media. And many thanks to Richard for compiling the answers!

Holidays and Houseplants

I recently attended a national meeting of garden communicators (GardenComm) and a common theme for two years has been the growing popularity of houseplants. Younger adults especially are becoming "plant parents" by adding plenty of greenery inside their homes and apartments. They incorporate the plants into their décor (and minis are great for that!). We all should take advantage of this trend and continue to share our love of growing African violets—and our pretty photos—with people we meet and on social media sites (like AVSA's Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook pages).

While you're making that list, add our 2020 calendar ...

In 2018, at least 30 percent of all U.S. households reported someone in their home purchased a houseplant. Let's get these new plant parents excited about African violets. You can give an African violet as a gift this year, potting it up and setting up a wick or other easy watering method to help the new grower enjoy success. Add a membership to AVSA as a bonus so the new grower receives *AVM* and learns about African violet culture.

Of course, there are plenty of plants and products for growers sold by AVSA Commercial Members. Be sure to check the ads in this issue and our list of Commercial Members online (avsa.org/commercial-members) for gift ideas for your friends and loved ones who grow, or as a hint for your own list to Santa.

While you're making that list, add our 2020 calendar, already available in the AVSA Store online or with a quick check mark on this issue's white protective cover. Happy Holidays!

Office Update: Tropical Storm Imelda

By now, you probably have heard about the unprecedented water damage at the AVSA office in Beaumont, Texas, from this fall's Tropical Storm Imelda. Office Manager Amy Carruth has been working long days cleaning up and moving to a temporary work location secured by the Executive Committee.

With all on her plate to help us get back to business as usual and to make sure members receive their magazines, Amy was unable to write her column for this issue.

Rest assured Amy is working hard to keep AVSA operations going strong and that she will update you in our January issue. Thank you for your patience; watch for updates on social media and the AVSA website.

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My First Violets: Mixing it Up

By Sandra Skalski

Mullica Hill, NJ • Email: sskalski@comcast.net

Whether your first violets are starter plants or mature plants, at some point, you will need to repot them. Repotting once or twice a year enhances growth, and fresh growth encourages blooming. What will you use for a potting mix? My first violets were gifts from my grandmother when I was 10 years old. As a young girl, I had no idea what a "soilless mix" was, and even if I knew, I still would have selected the closest thing at hand … the endless supply of soil in my backyard. That wasn't the best decision and those violets are long gone, but now I know a good deal more about what makes a good potting mix for African violets.

What does a potting mix do? Physically, a potting mix provides a substrate to anchor the roots for the plant to grow. It makes water and oxygen available to the roots. Chemically, the mix holds the nutrients the plant needs. In the wild, African violets grow in crevices and loose substrate on rocky cliffs or porous rocks. You want a potting mix that approximates these conditions: evenly moist but well-draining, slightly acidic, and with a loose, crumbly texture. Potting mixes suitable for African violets contain no actual soil; that is why they are called soilless mixes. Here are some tips to help you make a good decision for your plants' mix.

Potting Mix Ingredients

The most common ingredients in potting mixes are sphagnum peat moss, perlite, vermiculite and dolomite lime. Sphagnum peat moss comes from a bog plant that grows in low-pH, poorly draining environments. Since other plants cannot grow under these conditions, peat moss is free of weeds and weed seeds. It also has good water-holding capacity, which makes it ideal for houseplants and container gardens.

Perlite is made by heating a type of volcanic rock to a very high temperature. The water trapped in the rock expands, creating a light, porous material. There are various types of perlite, sorted by the average size of the particles, from very fine to quite chunky. Look for coarse or horticultural grade perlite. If it is sold by a numerical grade, look for grades 3 or 4.

> Look for coarse or horticultural grade perlite.

Vermiculite is made by heating up a type of laminated rock. It expands into a very light material that has excellent water-holding capacity and can improve soil aeration. In general, perlite drains better than vermiculite.

Dolomite lime is a powder-fine ground rock that is used to adjust the pH and add calcium and magnesium to the potting mix. Most peat moss has a pH of around 3.5 to 4, which is well outside the ideal pH for African violets and most other plants. Unless you are buying pure peat moss, most commercial potting mixes have some added dolomite lime to adjust the pH. (See more on pH on page 57). Be sure to look for the powdered dolomite. The granular type is for lawns and gardens.

Coir now is included in many commercial potting mixes. Coir is ground-up coconut husks. Compared to peat moss, coir has higher water retention, a finer texture and a neutral pH. Many growers have had success using this material, but I have found that I need to use a lot more perlite to make a mix suitable for wick watering.

Your Potting Mix

There is no single, perfect potting mix. The best potting mix for your plants depends on your growing

conditions, including the general temperature and humidity and how you water and fertilize your plants. If you wick water or mat water, you will want to use a potting mix that contains 40 percent to 60 percent perlite. If you buy a ready-made mix, look for words like "wicking mix" to let you know that this is a well-draining material.

The African violets you buy in the supermarket or big box store might be in a much heavier mix that holds a good bit of water. This makes sense because once these plants leave the greenhouse, their care won't be as consistent. When people get them home, it is easy to overwater them and kill them with kindness. Your violets still can grow in these mixes as long as you are careful to water them only when the top inch or so of soil feels dry to the touch.

If you are a new grower with a small number of plants, consider getting your potting mix from one of our AVSA commercial growers or an eBay supplier recommended by another grower. They've already done the work for you to blend an optimal mix, especially for African violets. As a new grower, you have many things to learn, and having a tried and true potting mix can eliminate one variable.

Many popular horticultural supply companies offer bags of potting mix especially for African violets. They usually come in 8-quart sizes, so it is ideal for the hobbyist with a small collection. Some of these mixes contain fertilizer, so if you choose to use them, be sure to cut back on your own fertilizer for the first few months after you repot. These blends are sold to be used straight out of the bag, but they generally are heavier mixes with very little perlite. I have had success mixing these blends evenly (50/50) with coarse perlite or 40 percent mix to 60 percent coarse perlite. The percentage of perlite can vary because factors like coarseness, individual growing conditions and even variations in the base mix can affect the water-holding capacity of the final product. Start with a 50/50 blend and adjust as needed.

If you have a lot of plants or you just like to "do it yourself," you can easily blend your own African violet potting mix. A good place to start is with either Pro-Mix BX or Pro-Mix HP or a similar commercial mix. These materials are readily available in garden centers or horticultural supply stores. One drawback is that the base mix comes in large bags or compressed bales. Depending on the number of plants you have, that might mean you have a very large supply of potting mix.

If it seems like that much potting mix will be more than you can foresee using, consider teaming up with your local club or growing friends to share the cost of materials. Mixing up a good potting mix could be a fun club activity, and a good opportunity to learn about potting mix and repotting violets. There are a lot of good recipes, probably as many as there are growers. Talk to successful growers; most of them will be happy to share their recipes.

Other Additions

I don't add vermiculite to my potting mix because I wick water, and I think the vermiculite makes the mixture hold too much water. The Pro-Mix I use contains mycorrhizae, which are beneficial fungi that have a symbiotic relationship with the roots and enhance their ability to absorb water and nutrients. Since the mycorrhizae in the base mix don't have a long shelf-life, I add some additional mycorrhizae before I pot up my plants. I adjust my pH with dolomite lime to a range of 6.5 to 6.8. This is a good pH range, however, many successful growers do not test or adjust their pH since most base mixes already have some dolomite lime added.

You might have read a lot about fertilizers and additives some growers include in their potting mixes. Before you start adding a laundry list of "special" additives, be sure first that you can tell whether any positive or negative changes to your plants are related to the potting mix and not some other change. No matter how promising you think the improvements or additives are going to be, try the new mix on just a few plants at first. Even the most experienced growers have made the mistake of moving an entire collection to something new, only to discover weeks or months later that perhaps they should have given it a test drive first.

That wasn't so hard, was it? Is it time for your plants to be repotted? Buy some of your favorite mix or mix up a batch and get to it. No matter what potting mix you choose, you will find that the best "additive" of all is your time and consistent care.

In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

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One of the most sought-after mutations in African violets in the early days of the 1940s and 1950s was variegated or nongreen foliage in a plant. We now have at least five distinct types of variegation and many articles have been written about their history and growth habits. However, as the following answers show, not all the variegation types lend themselves to hybridizing.

Q: How does one breed for variegated foliage?
A: The most common types of variegated foliage, Tommie Lou and Crown variegation, generally are inherited maternally through the seed parent. This means that the mutations are in the chloroplast DNA and are passed on to offspring only through the egg cells, not the pollen. These are the easiest types of variegation to work with. As long as the seed parent shows the variegation, the offspring generally should have some amount of variegation.

Mosaic variegation is a bit different in that it must be inherited as a recessive trait from both parents but can be expressed only through the seed parent line. Crosses of a mosaic parent to a solid green plant generally will give solid green F1 offspring. If the F1 plants are backcrossed to the mosaic parent, it makes a difference whether the mosaic parent was the pollen parent or the seed parent. Only those backcrosses with the mosaic parent as the seed parent will produce mosaic offspring. Backcrosses to the mosaic parent that was the pollen parent will continue to produce only solid green offspring.

Spontaneous variegations show up frequently, but unfortunately cannot be reproduced by leaf cuttings or sexually through the flowers. This type of variegation always is a dead end by any type of propagation.

Cultivars with the new and rare leaf chimera variegations are just starting to become available with an increasing range of flower colors. I am unclear as to how these are propagated through seeds, but if they are anything like flower chimeras it is probably a lucky accident that produces the rare leaf chimera seedling from a cross with a leaf chimera parent. I do not know if it helps, but I would suggest trying the leaf chimera plant as the seed parent rather than the pollen parent.

The amount of variegation often depends on the temperature of the growing conditions.

Q: Can one breed to increase the amount of variegation in the offspring?
A: The amount of variegation often depends on the temperature of the growing conditions. Cooling down the growing conditions often will increase the amount of leaf variegation shown in a plant. This is an environmental factor change, not a true genetic change. The mutation in the chloroplasts that fails to make functional chlorophyll is very much temperature sensitive and the plant makes less green pigment under cooler growing conditions. Growers can shift the amount of variegation by changing the temperatures of their growing conditions, not by changing the genetics of their plants.

Having said this, the amount of variegation also depends on the ratio of mutant to normal chloroplasts in the leaves. When leaves are put down or when

seed is produced, the ratio of mutant to normal chloroplasts can shift. This might result in offspring that have fewer or higher numbers of mutant chloroplasts compared to the original plant. The resulting baby plants or leaf cuttings can have corresponding changes in their amount of variegation. If the ratio shifts to more normal chloroplasts, the offspring will have correspondingly less variegation and might go solid green. If the ratio shifts to few normal chloroplasts, the offspring will have correspondingly higher amounts of variegation and can go solid white.

Solid green plants have no trouble surviving, but growers might be disappointed in the loss of variegation and pitch these plants. Plants that are white or nearly all white might look attractive but they will be very slow growing and have few flowers. The lack of green chlorophyll means the plant does not get much energy for growth and flowers. Growers might like the appearance of these plants, but they often are a disappointment because of their slow growth and failure to flower.

Some experienced growers have suggested that the amount of variegation in leaves should be no higher than perhaps 30 percent of the leaf area. This provides enough nongreen areas to be attractive yet retains enough green areas for good growth and flowering. You certainly can grow African violets with higher percentages of nongreen areas, but it takes high attention to growing details to be successful with plants that are mostly white.

Q: How does pink variegation work?

A: Pink variegation is caused by the plant producing a red pigment on the underside of the leaves. The ability to produce the red pigment is a genetic dominant trait. When the green chlorophyll is absent, the combination of the red lower epidermis with nongreen foliage produces various shades of pink. The red pigment shows more intensely in plants that are homozygous dominant for the trait. Changes in light conditions also can cause higher amounts of red pigment to be produced. The more red pigment, the more intense the pink will be in the variegation.

Q: I've seen some plants with intense yellow variegation in the young leaves. How is this variegation produced?

A: Yellow variegation is one of the colorations available in Crown variegation. In these plants, a yellow pigment similar to chlorophyll is made in the young leaves. Some cultivars have a high amount of yellow pigment that might persist as the leaves mature. Crown variegation, in either tan, pink or yellow, is maternally inherited and this color will be passed on to the F1 offspring if the variegated plant is used as the seed parent.

Q: Is there more than one type of mosaic variegation? Some plants that have "mosaic variegation" in their descriptions certainly don't look much alike.

A: I think your observation in differences is due to how the term "mosaic" is being used to describe the leaf variegation. The term "mosaic variegation" should be reserved for the leaf variegation that follows that of the first plant of this line, Lilian Jarrett Variegated. The outer edges of the leaves are dark green and the centers of the leaf blades are broken up into variable small patches of nongreen (often tan, beige, pink or light green) and dark green. Witch Doctor, Mac's Just Jeff and plants of my "Genetic" series have the true "mosaic variegation" foliage type.

Unfortunately, some growers also have used the term "mosaic" to describe leaves that have many small patches of white and green scattered across a leaf. Although I can appreciate the use of the term "mosaic" to describe this pattern of green and white patches in the leaves, this is not the intended use of the term "mosaic variegation" in African violets. Plants with this green and white speckled variegation are generally the result of an intense expression of the Tommie Lou variegation type.

If you are in doubt as to which way the term "mosaic variegation" is being used, try to get a picture of the plant or at least a very detailed description of the leaves. Most pictures in First Class are detailed enough to see the foliage and determine which way the term mosaic is being used.

How I Grow Minis

By Debbie McInnis Floyds Knobs, Indiana

I was asked to write an article about growing miniatures. It seems so elementary to me now, but it wasn't when I started. I remember when I, too, first got the "violet bug." I get the biggest kick reading the "newbie" questions from the forums on Facebook because I asked the very same questions. I love the posters' enthusiasm for growing and enjoying our hobby. I remember the excitement at receiving my first African violets in the mail and then wondering, "now what do I do?"

However, I wince at growers' hesitation to show their violets. They fear their plants aren't good enough. I remember feeling that way, too! I didn't want someone judging and pointing out the flaws of my little ones. Always remember, you're never alone and AVSA is here to help.

I went back to look at a couple of articles I had written and programs I've given. I had to laugh at some of the things I used to do. Techniques and products always are changing. I also recognized I've become lazy in some of my growing habits. The one thing that I never have swayed from, however, is my isolation practices. So, let's start there.

Isolation

You will prevent so much heartache for yourself if you develop strict isolation habits. No matter from whom or where you get your plants — isolate them. I repot the plants and place them in a baggie or a plastic container for several months. I check them for thrips when they bloom. And before I put the new plants out into my collection, I repot again and check the soil for soil mealybugs. I still will keep them separated from the rest of the collection for a while.

Potting and Repotting Minis

Now, let's assume you have adopted potting techniques that work for you. I happen to use a modified Texas-style potting method. It has its advantages, which I will come to.

You will prevent so much heartache for yourself if you develop strict isolation habits.

I used to repot semiminis and minis every three months. I don't do that anymore; I have too many violets now. If I repot my semis three times a year, I feel good about it. If it's been awhile since a repotting, I will rake through the soil around the roots. The soil is old and the pH is high. If I'm repotting in a timely manner, I will take soil from the top and cut off soil and roots from the bottom. The little ones grow fast, so to keep them in a 2 1/2-inch Solo cup, I usually cut a slice of the main stem off. I repot all plants going to a show.

When repotting, I check the roots. If the main stem is bare of roots from the top for more than an inch or so, it is time to rejuvenate. Remove several rows of leaves. Leave nine to six leaves (although I have left more). Cut the main stem to leave one-half inch. Repot in a Solo cup, and place a plastic baggie over and seal. Leave it in the baggie under lights for about a month to regrow its roots.

Wicking

I use nylon hosiery as a wick. I've also used yarn and twine, so you should choose whatever works best for you. I cut a piece of hose about one-fourth inch wide and curl about an inch on the bottom of the pot. Some growers will bring the wick up through the soil, perhaps for a more even distribution of moisture. But because

I have had trays, wicks and soil go dry, I place wicks on the bottom of the cups. That is because it is much easier for me to re-wet the wick by placing the Solo cup in a tray of water to recalibrate the wicking action. I fear bringing the wick up through the soil, because I'm not sure if the wick gets entirely wet. It would take more time for me to top water each Solo cup from the tray. I do mat water now as well; placing the wick through the grid was too much trouble.

Debbie does final grooming and preparation on her minis during the 2019 AVSA National Convention in Houston. Photo by Candace Baldwin.

Modified Texas-Style Potting

I add perlite to the bottom of my pots before I add my soil mix. This might help to prevent "wet feet," but it doesn't need to be done. Having more soil in such a small pot might be more beneficial. When repotting miniatures, I place the plant just below the top of the cup, not too deeply. The mini plants' petioles are not long enough and will tend to grow upright if the mini is planted too deeply. Ideally, you want leaves to reach out flat, always having the lower row laying on the edge of the pot.

A neck can develop from taking off leaves, usually the lowest three leaves from the bottom of the main stem. Remove the African violet from the pot and take off just enough soil or perlite so that once you place the violet back into the pot, the leaves radiate straight out, laying again on the top edge of the pot. If there is a half-inch neck, take that amount off from the bottom. If this isn't done and there is a neck, eventually the lower leaves will tend to droop down around the pot, especially if the soil should go dry. If that happens, lightly water and place the plant in a plastic container for a day until the leaves are turgid again, then repot the violet as above. You might have to remove the lower leaves.

After they've had a major repotting, I place African violets in a plastic container under light for a few days. I then remove them and set them in water to get the wick entirely wet and place the plant on the mat or grid over a reservoir tray. I don't fertilize for about 4 weeks. You will notice an immediate growth spurt.

Watch Your Plants

Keep an eye on your plants. Leaves might start to overlap around the crown. The crown leaves might be under a row of leaves. You also might notice fertilizer burn. Deal with these problems as soon as you see them. If not, your crown leaves might become disfigured. You might be able to wash fertilizer salts away before they damage the plants' new growth in the crown. Wash the plant with a thin stream of warm water from your faucet and even leach the pot with warm water. Set the pot on layers of paper towel to absorb excess water and take a paper towel edge and roll it to a point, then place it down in the small crown to absorb the excess water there. This will help to prevent crown rot.

African violets are very resilient. Yes, you can wash them with warm water. You can get their leaves wet. Remember, it rains in Africa but you can blot the leaves or wait until they dry before placing the plants back under lights. I repeat, violets are very resilient. I've saved many a croaking violet. If you have the time and the space, it can be done. Believe it or not, some I have saved have returned to the show table. And I'm talking about truly withered, dried, shrunken and neglected plants. They have a will to survive.

If leaves are overlapping and laying on top of a crown leaf, I turn my tweezers and use the upper flat part to get under the leaf and place it in position. These leaves are tiny and tender. They might tear, but not to worry. If this happens or the leaf is too damaged by fertilizer burn, take the leaf off. Because of the mini plant's fast rate of growth, soon it will not be missed. Is the crown growing too tight? Take the plant away from the light and place it on its own reservoir with water (I use baby food jars) until it loosens up.

Lighting and Listening

That brings us to lighting, and I'll assume you have this figured out, too. You might be using LEDs, T-8s or T-12s. But, if you have spaces between your leaves, you are not listening to your violets. Perhaps your violets need more light hours. Or, the plants might need to be closer to the tubes. Lower your lights if your unit allows or raise your violets by placing them higher on the shelf, perhaps on top of another tray.

Your violets are talking to you. Listen, and then follow through by changing the distance from the pot to the tubes or adding more light hours. This can reduce the spaces between leaves.

Growing Little Ones Compared to Standards

I have heard people say that semiminis and minis are much easier to grow than standard African violets. I disagree. Perhaps what people mean to say is that semiminis and minis grow much faster than standards. In comparison, I seem to be grooming and repotting down necks much more often with semis. It seems to me the process is ongoing. With standards, you repot, arrange leaves, take leaves off, turn the plant every now and then and wait, and wait.

In my opinion, however, the semiminis and minis are much more forgiving. If a leaf is broken off a standard it takes much longer to fill the space (if ever) or to grow out the next row of leaves. A semi-miniature might have a culture break. A smaller row of leaves might grow right in the middle of the plant. If you catch this in a timely manner before a show, and remove them, it might not be noticeable like it would be on a standard. Still, even after I acquire a semimini or mini, it takes me two years or longer to shape it into a show plant.

We say semiminis and miniatures are smaller and don't take up as much space, and for that reason we can collect more of them. But I caution: don't collect so many that you don't have the time to take care of them.

> African violets are very resilient. Yes, you can wash them with warm water. You can get their leaves wet.

Depending where they are in their growth you might have five large standards on each shelf and room for three shelves on one light stand. On your semi and mini grow cart, you might have eight semis on a matted tray, four trays on a light shelf and four shelves on one light stand … get the picture? So, this means you also will have more repotting and grooming to do to keep them in shape for show or even to keep them alive. For some of us, a few minis have bitten the dust before we understood the learning curve.

There is nothing magical about growing the little ones. To grow any lovely African violet, it helps if your growing habits are consistent. Be attentive. Watch and handle the plants. Don't be afraid to take off leaves. Remember, this stimulates their growth. If there is an issue, deal with it and follow through. And don't have more semis and minis than you enjoy caring for.

Editor's note: Watch our March 2020 issue for Debbie's tips on grooming the little ones for show.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Jolly Wit's End

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature

Oh, Those Lovely Little Ones: Miniature African Violets

By Sue Hoffmann Virginia Beach, Virginia

Email: violetsue123@outlook.com

Walking into the grocery store, I stopped to look at a table of blooming plants in the floral section, and then I saw them—Optimara miniature African violets. I was mesmerized. They were only 3 inches in diameter and in full bloom! Although I grew African violets, this was the first time I'd seen anything like these. The year was 1986; I went home with Optimara Little Diamond and Optimara Rose Quartz from the Optimara "Little Jewel" series. That was my introduction to minis, and I was hooked!

I wanted one mini of every color and was delighted to find fantasy, edged, ruffled and girl leaf varieties. They were something different and fun to grow, and they bloomed constantly on the baker's rack in my bright kitchen eating area. Since 12 miniature plants fit on each shelf, I relocated my two standard plants to a window in the family room.

Petite Blarney with its nickel-sized leaves.

Growing and Showing Minis

Miniature African violets are proportionally downsized duplicates of their standard counterparts. Optimara's website claims all its miniature violets are genuine miniatures and that "no growth retardants are used to keep them small." Ideally, miniature varieties should grow to 6 inches or less in diameter; if you show them, this is a golden rule. (As an AVSA Teacher and Master Judge, I can tell you any miniature more than 6 inches will be eliminated from consideration by AVSA judges). Standard African violets are happiest in 3 1/2-inch to 4-inch pots, while minis will spend their lives in 2-inch to 2 1/2-inch pots. This makes them perfect for limited growing spaces.

Looking at cost and convenience, plastic bathroom (3-ounce) cups work beautifully for mini pots; you can use a soldering iron to burn holes for drainage and a Sharpie marker to record the plant name and repot date on the cup. I use the same peat-based soilless mix, fertilizers, natural/artificial light, water, temperatures and humidity I use for my other plants. With the small ones, I find the wick-watering method is the easiest way to regulate watering. I wind 6 inches of #36 Mason line around the cup bottom and let about 2 inches of line extend out the bottom, add soil and then plant. The cup will slip directly into a glass baby food jar filled with water. Make sure to wet your wick and leave an air space between the bottom of the pot and the water surface.

I lay the wick for watering a mini around the bottom of the cup and out the bottom.

It is easy to isolate minis in an inflated sandwich bag before introduction to an existing collection. They are ideal for design and can be nestled into the foliage in a terrarium or dish garden without being overpowering. One or two miniatures add a beautiful pop of color without drawing too much attention since their scale blends well with the landscape design.

Favorite Minis

Thirty-three years have passed; I have moved several times and gone through different growing conditions, but I still love these lovely little ones. My collection of two has grown to 80 different varieties. I graduated to fluorescent light stands in the 1990s and recently progressed to LED lighting.

My collection of two has grown to 80 different varieties.

There are 1,019 miniature varieties listed in the AVSA First Class program. A few of the earliest I found are: Buttons and Bows (AVSA #83, O. Silcott, 8/1/1951); Violette Bronze Baby (#658, F. Kellar, 1/9/1951); and Baby Helen (#21, R. Baxter, 11/2/52). These early minis all have girl leaves.

In fact, many miniatures qualify as vintage varieties (registered for at least 25 years), plus they are eligible for several show awards, including but not limited to: Best in Show, Best Fantasy and Best Vintage.

Some of my favorite minis are: Chimpansy, Everdina, Jolly Cupid, Jolly Orchid, Lil Ballerina, Mac's Pizza Pizzicato, Optimara Little Moonstone, Persian Prince, Petite Blarney, Petite Jewel, Pink Dove, Precious Red, Rob's Chilly Willy, Rob's Love Bite, Rob's Twinkle Blue, and Toy Castle.

Several outstanding new minis introduced by Russian hybridizers include SK-Perveya Lyubov (SK-First Love) and SK-Peizashv Tomane (SK-Misty Landscape), both with tiny bell blossoms, and LE-Prague with striking variegated girl leaves.

Mac's Pizza Pizzicato (left) and SK-Pervaya Lyubov sit atop baby food wicking jars.

This is a brief look into my love for these little ones. I haven't mentioned semi-miniatures (which are 8 inches or less in diameter) or trailers. In the African violet world, there are always new avenues to explore, new plants to find and new soil mixes to try. It is a fascinating hobby and I feel lucky to share my love with so many good friends and fellow growers.

Happy growing and please consider sharing some of your experiences in the magazine!

Contest Entry —

Minis to Standards, And Everything In Between

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

After many failed attempts to grow minis and semiminis with the longevity equivalent to that of my standards, I avoided growing them altogether. They would grow well, flower and slowly disintegrate on me. After seeing beautiful minis at the 2018 AVSA Convention in Buffalo, I decided to give minis and semiminis another try.

I propagate minis and semiminis from leaves that were purchased online as a variety pack. With the difficulty I have had growing minis from starter plants in the past, leaf propagation allowed the plantlets to grow fully acclimated to my environment. After potting up babies, I noticed they quickly took off. It seems I slowly got the hang of them. They needed a more frequent repotting regimen than my standards and a year later, much to my surprise, I got them to flower. The difficulty now is getting them on a show schedule, which does not often work, since some minis and semiminis flower more sporadically than others.

Unlike my minis and semiminis, most of my standard African violets were purchased as starter plants from AVSA commercial vendors and David Dick from Blue Mountain Violets. From personal experience, I can get standards from starter to show in six months. Whereas, for minis, it will take from a year to one-and-a-half years from leaf to show. The standards can be more forgiving and somewhat easier to work with than the minis and semiminis. For example, removing a sucker on a mini is riskier and can be more damaging if done incorrectly.

I grow with T5 lights, which often are too intense for most experienced growers, but minis thrive under them. My current plant stands from Gardeners Supply Company allow me to lower the lights on either side to get bulbs closer to the light-hungry minis. With my lights on 6.5 hours a day, my standards typically get between 1500 and 4000 lumens of light at their crowns, whereas, my minis and semiminis get between 3000 and 5000 lumens.

Grooming minis can be a task, especially if you have many of them. Being that minis are smaller, I find myself compensating by growing more of them.

My minis and standards share a light stand.

Although having a mixed setup of standards, minis and semiminis presents its challenges, requires troubleshooting, and means moving plants around and lowering light fixtures, it is fun and rewarding to learn about each plant's needs and to get them to thrive.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Cajun's Lil Forever Blue

Exhibited by: Mary Corondan
Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux
Miniature
2019 Best Miniature African Violet

Growing Minis: Susan Hapner and Anne Nicholas

By Teresa Odle editor@avsa.org

Since I have come to love growing mini African violets, I wanted to ask two skilled growers of the little ones a few tips on how they care for their minis and semiminis and, of course, why they love growing them. It was fun and helpful talking with Susan Hapner and Anne Nicholas, who have a combined 80-plus years of experience caring for and showing mini and semimini African violets.

The First Mini Best in Show

Susan Hapner started growing mini African violets in 1974. With little room and a one-year-old daughter, she started with minis. Fast forward 30 years, through life events that included being a mother, a teacher and caring for her ill husband, to the 2004 AVSA National Convention in Tucson. Before the show, Susan picked a few plants off the shelf to enter. One of those, her Persian Prince (S. Sorano), won Best in Show. It was the first time a mini African violet had won the entire show.

Susan's 2004 Best in Show Winner, Persian Prince. Photo by Winston Goretsky.

"It was a shock that my plant won," says Susan. She recalls taking photos while the public visited the show. She overheard an older gentleman, who didn't know Persian Prince was Susan's entry, say, "Now why would they go and pick that little bitty plant when that one next to it is a lot bigger and prettier?" Susan held her tongue on how judges award a collection of scores.

It was the first time a mini African violet had won the entire show.

The Best Possible Neighbor

Anne Nicholas lived in San Antonio in the mid-1980s. On walks she took with her husband, Richard, she noticed a neighbor behind them they called "the violet lady." They would visit her when her garage door was up. "It turned out to be Hortense Pittman," says Anne. Hortense gave Anne her first minis. "Richard was growing standards and I grew minis and semiminis because they would fit on the shelf underneath and beside his," Anne says.

Anne started with a few minis and semiminis and her collection grew, now numbering about 150 plants. She has won many awards for her minis and semiminis, especially with what Anne calls, "one of the best plants of all time," Hortense's Precious Pink. "I loved Hortense and wanted to do justice to her plants," Anne says. I asked Anne and Susan a few questions about caring for and showing their minis.

Prevention

Most of mini growers' cultural practices mirror those standard growers follow, and both Anne and Susan emphasized pest and disease prevention. "I isolate new plants I bring in," says Anne. She never places a new plant on her wick watering tray, but gives the

new plant its own reservoir and sets it aside until it proves to have no problems. Having said that, Anne is realistic about prevention, with a dog and the family's love of being outside. "We don't hose down every time we come in and out the door," Anne says.

Susan seldom buys plants preferring leaves. "When I buy a plant, I take the leaves off when I get home," says Susan. She places all new leaves away from others and puts some Marathon in the soil, sealing the starts inside a plastic bag.

Repotting

It can be tricky deciding when a mini or semimini baby is ready to pot, so I asked Anne and Susan how they handle this. For babies, Susan judges by looking at the plant. "You've got to have them a pretty good size for them to have a good root system," she says. Anne agrees, saying she might pot one or two babies that look healthy and ready, then return other babies to the leaf pot to keep growing.

Susan repots her minis about every three months. She adds some Marathon granules from a small spoon when she repots. "It is the only chemical I use," Susan says. Anne prefers "squatty" white pots (2 1/8 inches) for her minis and 2 3/8-inch ones for her larger minis and semiminis. "When I use Solo cups, I put a hole in the bottom for the wick, an extra hole or two for drainage, and a couple of holes low on the sides for aeration," Anne says.

Jolly Lulu, Anne's Best Miniature African Violet winner at the 2017 AVSA National Convention.

Symmetry and Grooming

Grooming minis and semiminis to keep them in good shape or for show differs a little from grooming standards, but with the same principles. "My schedule is a little different from one for standards because they grow so much faster," says Anne. She gives her minis a "hard break" five months from show date. The hard break involves taking the plant out of the pot, breaking it back to two to three rows of leaves, or three to four rows if it is a slow grower, and repotting it into a new pot. Three months before a show, Anne does a "soft break," which is a gentle repotting that does not disturb the roots too much. "This is the time to remove leaves for symmetry," says Anne. She disbuds and moves plants with good show potential to a prime space on the growing shelf.

Susan starts grooming about one year before a show. "I am a big advocate for no more than three rows of leaves on minis and semiminis," she says. She adds that with more than three rows, the leaves get crowded and the bottom leaves eventually will fall off.

General Care

Watering and soil mixes are similar for minis and standards, both Anne and Susan say, with one exception. Anne does not add the Texas layer of perlite to the bottom of her mini pots. "I just mix perlite in with the soil," she says, because the pots really are too small to have room for that extra layer. With good drainage and aeration holes, growers should achieve the same effects as if they added a perlite layer. Susan reminds growers to use soil made specifically for wicking or not for wicking, depending on your watering method. For years, she used John Cook's Cape Cod Violetry wicking mix, which now is available from Enchanted Gardens. Anne adds that it helps to learn about pH and know the pH of your water supply and potting mix.

The best tip both and semimini growers have to offer is to enjoy growing the plants. "Only grow what you love to handle, not so many that it's a chore," says Anne. She continues, "Enjoy it and all the friends you make while growing." Susan agrees: "You can grow beautiful violets without spending every moment of your life doing it."

Dead Violets in Bloom – My Experience with Fusarium Disease

By Joyce Stork Henderson NV

It was a very humbling day when the plant pathology diagnosis arrived with the recommendation to destroy every plant in my house and to sanitize thoroughly. A sample of an African violet had been examined by the Nevada State Plant Pathologist for a persistent leaf spot problem. When the email arrived saying I had *Fusarium oxysporum*, a fungus leading to an incurable soil-borne disease that causes root rot, I was stunned.

My Symptoms

In 2016, my husband, Kent, had been treating troublesome plants in Nebraska. When we relocated to Nevada in 2017, it wasn't long before a tray of starter plants developed soft brown spots on the leaves and stems. Kent died suddenly, and in the following months, the plant disease only grew worse.

Rhapsodie Michelle with spot on leaf caused by *Fusarium oxysporum*.

Mature blooming violets would suddenly develop a soft brown spot on a random leaf. The spot sometimes started at the leaf edge; other times it would be in the middle of the leaf. Within days, the entire leaf would be soft, brown and wilted, and a nearby leaf would develop symptoms. The affected leaves often were the oldest leaves, but the middle rows also could be the site of the first spots. With backlighting, I was able to see the infection spreading into cells surrounding the spot.

Black roots always are a sign of disease.

I tried repotting, cutting away roots, washing the crowns in soapy water, and restarting them in individual closed bags. African violets treated that way seemed fine inside the clear plastic bags, but once they were in the open air, the symptoms would return within months.

I was careful about sanitation. I discarded sick plants into closed containers quickly, washed my hands between handling plants, and kept surfaces and tools clean with bleach water. I replaced shelves and lights in case they were harboring the disease. I threw away many plants, but I always kept some African violets along with my other houseplants. I used the same container of potting soil and the same spoon to stir the soil throughout the two-year battle and sometimes I allowed water from dripping plants to drain into the soil bucket. *Those were critical mistakes.*

I discovered that turmeric root powder (a kitchen spice) could be sprinkled on the top and underside of a leaf spot, causing the spot to dry up in 24 hours. Nearly every violet had sprinkles of orange turmeric on the leaves. The violets looked robust, but spots still developed. Turmeric was only a stop-gap measure; it was not a cure.

In July 2019, a pathology test sample came back with the diagnosis of *F. oxysporum* and the observation

that the roots were fully rotted, even though the sample looked healthy and the plant was in bloom. *I had not been watching the roots and had missed a key symptom of the disease.*

Same Rhapsodie Michelle with black roots.

About *Fusarium oxysporum*

Fusarium is one of several root rot diseases that affects many different types of plants. The name of the disease was familiar to me, but it is not commonly reported by African violet hobbyists, possibly because growers don't often get a laboratory diagnosis.

F. oxysporum has many subspecies (my specific subspecies was not identified.) It is known commonly as Fusarium wilt. The pathogen produces three types of asexual spores: microconidia (the most abundant), macroconidia and chlamydospores (which survive for long periods of time in dry soil.) It also produces mycelia that survive in bits of soil debris and can be spread by water splash and tools, as well as by infected plants.

Fusarium wilt infects a plant through the roots, especially through wounds, and grows into the xylem, where spores are produced freely, clogging the vascular system and resulting in rotting roots and brown wilted spots on leaves.

Because the chlamydospores can survive almost any challenge, the simplest way to solve the problem is to discard all plants and soil into a closed container. Thorough sanitation of every surface, tool and container is critical to remove the smallest amounts of residual dust.

Violets and gesneriads on stand look healthy; 100 percent had black, rotted roots.

Throw it All Away

On the day that I emptied my house of every plant (African violet and otherwise), I tallied what I saw as I removed each plant from its pot. Virtually every plant (of any kind) had completely blackened, rotting roots. Only two houseplants (spathiphyllum and hoya plants) showed no infection. Except for the persistent leaf spotting, many violets were blooming and appeared to be vigorous.

Various houseplants and violets growing in natural light. All but four had completely rotted roots.

Of the leaf cuttings, which were each bagged individually, most also had black rotting roots. Two cuttings were an exception — both were Hunter hybrid leaves that I had just received at the Houston convention. Hybridizer Ken Muzalewski reported later that he treats all his plants with Clearys 3336F, a systemic fungicide that is listed as effective against fusarium pathogens. This product might be an effective tool to prevent infection and I probably will use it in the future.

F. oxysporum had decimated my entire collection of plants with great stealth. The brown soft spots on the leaves were only a hint of the root rot below. For those concerned that this might be the cause of a leaf-spotting issue in their own collection, I would urge you to unpot plants and examine them for healthy white roots. Black roots always are a sign of disease.

> I had not been watching the roots and had missed a key symptom of the disease.

After discarding all my plants and soil mix into closed bags, my house has been completely cleaned, including walls, containers and shelf units. It will remain devoid of plants for at least three months. Over time, I will build my collection again, with great care. I do not want to experience fusarium wilt again.

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

By Susan Hapner St. Louis, Missouri

Donations received from July 1, 2019, through August 30, 2019 Total: $287

Geneva — $100-$499
Diane Dunn

Multicolor — $50-$99
Columbus AVS
Linda Scott

Thumbprint — under $25
Roxie and Roy Bailey
Earl Culp

Thumbprint (continued)
Steven Davis
Marion Gillen
Brent T. Johnson
Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta
Sylvia Row
Caroline Storey
Margery Townley

Coming Events

November 2-3 — New Jersey
TriState African Violet Council
57th Annual Show and Sale
Haggerty Education Center
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
53 East Hanover Ave.
Morristown, NJ
Saturday: 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Sunday: 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Tristateafricanvioletcouncil@gmail.com

November 2- 3 — Wisconsin
Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs
Annual Judged Show and Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall
531 Knapp St., Oshkosh, WI
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kevin Degner: 920-426-3764
kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net
Free admission and parking

November 6-9 — Florida
Dixie African Violet Society
Convention, Show and Sale
Lexington Hotel
1515 Prudential Dr.
Jacksonville, FL
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sales); 1-5:30 p.m. (show)
Saturday: 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (sales);
10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (show)
Sharon Gartner: 904-536-4182
svioletlady@yahoo.com
DAVS.org

November 8-9 — Virginia
Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society
Convention, Show and Sale
Holiday Inn and Suites, North Beach
3900 Atlantic Ave.
Virginia Beach, VA
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.(sales); 1-5 p.m. (show)
Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.(sales); 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (show)
Susan Hoffmann: 757-463-5383
violetsue123@outlook.com

January 25, 2020 — Colorado
Rocky Mountain Streptocarpus Society
Tagawa Gardens
7711 So. Parker Rd.
Centennial, CO
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Trudy Brekel: 303-452-9015
love4violets@yahoo.com

It's a Little Bit Country

Can you name three well-known country music singers who hail from Arkansas? Take a shot and then see the answers on page 52, where 2020 AVSA National Convention chair Danny Tidwell lets you know a little about Arkansas celebrities, including music legends, actors and authors. It's just a sampling of the history and culture of Arkansas. 2020 will be here before you know it! So, plan now for the convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, May 24 to May 31. You're sure to love the show, sale and location!

A Family Portrait — *Drymonia decora*

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, Ohio
Email: melsgrice@earthlink.net

Let me introduce you to a plant in the gesneriad family that seldom is seen. *Drymonia decora* is one example of one of the largest (100-plus species) and most variable genera in the family. The genus is found from Mexico and the Caribbean south through French Guiana, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Brazil. *D. decora* was collected in Costa Rica.

Drymonia decora spiraled upward for the recent Gesneriad Society Show.

A light yellow, bell-shaped *D. decora* flower.

D. decora basically is a large wandering vine (called lianas in their native tropical rain forest habitat) that might be a challenge for the typical grower. Judicious pruning can result in attractive plants. I first saw *D. decora* at the Philadelphia Flower Show in 2013. Charlene Marietti exhibited an attractive specimen that she had trained on a circular-shaped trellis. She had trained the vine to spiral around and around the wire ring with just a few strategically placed wire ties. Normally, *D. decora* is found hanging downward from whatever object to which it attaches in its native habitat.

Showing *Drymonia decora*

I wanted to show my lengthy *D. decora* vine at the Gesneriad Society Show in Cincinnati, Ohio, this July. I knew that transportation and display would be a problem until I remembered how Charlene had exhibited her plant. I fastened my 4-foot vine to a green wire trellis with thin wire in a spiral shape, thus making a much more compact and attractive plant (see the photo).

I could not find a box or container large enough to transport my plant to the show, so the plant had to sit on top of other boxes with lids that I had positioned near the back window of my van. Driving to the show, I could see the plant in my rearview mirror gradually leaning over more and more with each bump in the road. Eventually, I could not see the plant at all but could not stop to adjust anything. Upon arrival at the show, I added another smaller trellis at the back of the plant to stabilize it.

About *Drymonia decora*

D. decora has long dark green leaves that have a leathery look to them. The leaves emerge from a square stem instead of the typical round stems of many gesneriads. Aerial roots emerge from most leaf nodes. I removed many of these roots for the show since I feared that some judges might object to them as being unsightly. At home, I try to mist the plant and aerial roots with a hand sprayer whenever I remember to do so. The plant seems to like this since it is from a rain forest habitat.

New aerial roots have grown back since returning home from the show. Fortunately, the light-yellow, bell-shaped flowers will bloom from old woody stems so there were flowers all around the circle of

the show plant. The *D. decora* in the photo is planted in a large shallow pan pot, basically because of the size of the wire trellis, not because it needs that much soil. The photo also shows a top dressing of "mulch" to hide the large amount of perlite in the soil. I promptly removed this mulch upon returning home from the show.

I heartily recommend you try growing *D. decora* and other gesneriads in the genus *Drymonia*.

Gesneriad Portraits

By Mel Grice Englewood, Ohio

I am sad to report the recent passing of Georgene Albrecht. Her knowledge of gesneriads was legendary. Georgene authored the column in the *African Violet Magazine* about gesneriads called "The Family Portrait" from 1990 to 1996 and later from 2002 to 2014. Dale Martens authored the column about gesneriads from 1997 to 2001, calling her column "Gesneri-Advice." In her final column, Dale said, "Georgene is an absolute delight, and when people talk about her, they smile and their eyes sparkle."

Mel Grice and Georgene Albrecht.

I was thrilled when Georgene asked me to write some "Family Portrait" columns in 2014. She then turned the column over to me and I asked Paul Kroll to author alternate columns with me beginning in 2015. In addition to being a fantastic gardener, floral arranger and artistic designer, Georgene was a gifted artist. Her artwork is featured on the cover of AVSA's 50th Anniversary book.

Georgene's illustrations of *Kohleria* 'Manchu' (above) and *Sinningia* 'Flair' (below).

All of her "Family Portrait" columns were accompanied by a line drawing of the plant she was featuring — hence the title — "Family Portrait." Georgene gifted me with her original ink drawings for the column. What a treasure! I will miss my mentor and friend so much! Looking at her drawings makes me smile with fond memories of her.

AVSA's Best Varieties List for 2019

By Trudy Brekel Littleton, Colorado

Phone 303-452-9015 • Email: violetlady7@msn.com

The votes are in, and we've listed below the 25 best African violet varieties for 2019. Any African violet grower can participate. We had an excellent response to voting this year, especially from African violet growers who receive the AVSA Growing Tips newsletter.

The Best Varieties List helps growers learn about violet varieties that are easy and enjoyable to grow. Hybridizers with several cultivars on the Best Varieties List probably have plenty of other hybrids that growers will love.

There always are two ways you can choose to vote—by filling out the form available on the AVSA website and mailing it in, or through our online voting system. Voting for favorite 2020 varieties will close July 31, 2020. Watch for more 2020 voting information in future issues of *African Violet Magazine*, Growing Tips and on AVSA social media sites.

Thanks to all who participated in voting this year. Here is your ranked list of Best Varieties for 2019 and their First Class descriptions.

1. Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler
•(8745) 07/27/1998 •P. Hancock
•Semidouble bright pink ruffled pansy/variable raspberry fantasy; raspberry edge.
•Variegated dark green, cream and pink, plain, glossy/red back. •Large (DAVS1624).

2. Jersey Snow Flakes
•(9820) 12/14/2007 •R. Kurzynski
•Single-semidouble white pansy/white sparkle overlay.
•Variegated medium green and white, plain quilted. •Standard.

3. Buckeye Nostalgia
•(10484) 01/05/2012 •P. Hancock
•Semidouble pale blue ruffled pansy.
•Variegated medium green and cream.
•Standard (DAVS 1753).

The Best Varieties List helps growers learn about violet varieties that are easy and enjoyable to grow.

4. Rob's Boolaroo
•(8053) 03/05/1994 •R. Robinson
•Semidouble light pink sticktite pansy/bright blue fantasy.
•Medium green, quilted. •Semiminiature trailer.

5. Buckeye Seductress
•(9669) 07/13/2006 •P. Hancock
•Double dark lavender star/wide white band, green edge.
•Variegated medium green and cream, plain.
•Large (DAVS 1632).

6. Ness' Crinkle Blue
•(8136) 01/19/1995 •D. Ness
•Double dark blue star/variable thin white edge.
•Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back.
•Semiminiature.

7. Picasso
•(6924) 10/04/1988 •M. Tremblay
•Double light blue and white/variable white fantasy.
•Variegated medium green, plain/sliver-greenback.
•Large.

8. Precious Red
•(9724) 01/15/2007 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble-double dark red pansy.
•Dark green, plain/red back. •Miniature.

9. Jolly Orchid
•(9719) 01/15/2007 •H. Pittman
•Double orchid and white pansy.
•Medium green, plain, quilted.
•Miniature (TX Hyb, DAVS 1661).

10. Blue Dragon
•(9516) 12/17/2005 •Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/P. Sorano
•Double light blue large frilled star/raspberry edge.
•Dark green, plain/redback. •Large.

11. Harbor Blue
•(6174) 02/24/1986 •T. Weber
•Single light blue/darker eye.
•Dark green, plain/redback. •Large.

12. Tiger
•(3433) 06/01/1978 •I. Fredette
•Semidouble dark blue-violet.
•Variegated. •Large.

13. Rob's Vanilla Trail
•(9296) 11/21/2003 •R. Robinson
•Double cream to blush white pansy.
•Dark green, quilted, serrated, pointed.
•Semiminiature trailer.

14. Edge of Darkness
•(10677) 03/19/2014 •Paul Sorano/ Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
•Semidouble dark purple star/frilled white edge.
•Variegated dark green and ivory, serrated/red back.
•Large.

15. EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia (EK-Blue-eyed Russia)
•(9567) 01/17/2006 •E. Korshunova
•Semidouble-double bright blue large star/ purple edge.
•Medium green, pointed. •Standard (Russ/Ukr).

16. The Alps
•(7813) 10/03/1992 •K. Horikoshi/H. Sawara
•Single-semidouble chimera white pansy/light blue stripe.
•Medium green, plain, quilted. •Standard.

17. Precious Pink
•(6025) 07/05/1985 •H. Pittman
•Semidouble pink.
•Variegated, plain. •Semiminiature (DAVS 913, TX Hyb).

18. Pixie Blue
•(2598) 09/16/1974 •L. Lyon
•Single purple-blue/darker center.
•Plain, ovate. •Miniature trailer.

19. Rob's Fuddy Duddy
•(7886) 06/02/1993 •R. Robinson
•Semidouble dark mauve-purple sticktite pansy.
•Dark green, quilted. •Semiminiature.

20. Carolina Elegant Affair
•(10913) 07/31/2017 •L. Abplanalp
•Single-semidouble white ruffled star/pink patches.
•Variegated medium green and white, quilted, wavy.
•Standard.

21. Frozen in Time
•(9167) 02/03/2003 •Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano
•Single-semidouble white pansy/variable lavender tinge; green edge.
•Variegated light green and ivory, quilted. •Standard.

22. Annabelle
•(8636) 07/18/1997 •K. Stork
•Double pink two-tone star.
•Black-green/red back. •Large.

23. Rhapsodie Clementine
•(8341) 12/14/1995 •Holtkamp
•Single light blue ruffled star.
•Dark green, pointed, serrated/red back. •Standard.

24. Cajun's Coujon
•(10633) 12/07/2013 •B. Thibodeaux
•Single pink two-tone pansy/dark raspberry sparkle edge.
•Variegated medium green, cream and pink, quilted.
•Large (DAVS 1781).

25. Kentucky Gooseberries
•D. Rollins
•Double white star/light pink blush.
•Medium green, serrated. •Semiminiature (DAVS 1602).

AVSA Honor Roll of African Violets

By Trudy Brekel Littleton, Colorado

Phone: 303-452-9015 • Email: violetlady7@msn.com

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Honor Roll. There are four plants that were added to the Honor Roll of African Violets this year. They include two standards, one semi-miniature and one miniature.

To be in the Honor Roll of African Violets, a variety must have appeared in the Best Varieties list for three consecutive years.

1999
•Milky Way Trail (7469) •J. Stahl
•Ness' Satin Rose (8144) •D. Ness

2000
•Powwow (7708) •K. Stork
•Rob's Sticky Wicket (6467) •R. Robinson

2001
•Windy Day (7719) •Stork/Boone

2002
•There were no additions to the Honor Roll of African violets

2003
•Rainbow's Quiet Riot •R. Wasmund

2004
•Frozen in Time (9167) •S. Sorano
•Orchard's Bumble Magnet (8479) •R. Wilson

2005
•Rebel's Splatter Kake (8695) •R. Bann

2006
•There were no additions to the Honor Roll of African violets

2007
•ACA'S Red Ember (8732) •J. Brownlie

2008
•Blue Dragon (9516) •Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/ P. Sorano

2009
•Bob Serbin (8292) •J. Brownlie

2010
•There were no additions to the Honor Roll of African violets

2011
•Plumberry Glow (9187) •Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano

2012
•There were no additions to the Honor Roll of African violets

2013
•Harbor Blue (6174) •T. Weber

2014
•Rob's Chilly Willy (8170) •R. Robinson
•Rob's Fuddy Duddy (7886) •R. Robinson

2015-2017
•There were no additions to the Honor Roll of African violets

2018
•Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler (8745) •P. Hancock
•Buckeye Seductress (9669) •P. Hancock
•Precious Red (9724) •H. Pittman
•Rob's Boolaroo (8053) •R. Robinson

2019
•Buckeye Nostalgia (10484) •P. Hancock
•Jersey Snow Flakes (9820) •R. Kurzynski
•Jolly Orchid (9719) •H. Pittman
•Kentucky Gooseberries •D. Rollins

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Boogie Woogie

Exhibited by: Kurt Jablonski
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Boolaroo

Exhibited by: Sue Melson
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature Trailer
2019 Best Trailer

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Ken Muzalewski — Carrollton, TX

Hunter's Antidote
•(11215) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble lavender frilled pansy/purple fantasy, random green edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, ruffled.
•Standard.

Hunter's Asystole
•(11216) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble-double medium-dark pink frilled star.
•Variegated dark green and cream, serrated.
•Standard.

Hunter's Blue Northern
•(11217) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble light blue two-tone pansy.
•Variegated dark green and white, quilted.
•Standard.

Hunter's Bunny Tracks
•(11218) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble pink pansy/blue fantasy.
•Dark green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Hunter's Candy Cane
•(11219) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single chimera fuchsia sticktite wavy bell/white stripe.
•Medium green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Hunter's Chickadee Chirps
•(11220) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double pink pansy/white-green edge.
•Medium green, plain. •Miniature.

Hunter's Chipmunk Cheeks
•(11221) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble white pansy/pink eye.
•Medium green, plain. •Miniature.

Hunter's Drunken Floozies
•(11222) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double pink pansy/raspberry sparkle edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, serrated.
•Standard.

Hunter's Elk Ivory
•(11223) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double light pink star/white-green edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, wavy, serrated. •Standard.

Hunter's Exit Wound
•(11224) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single red sticktite pansy/darker eye, blue overlay.
•Variegated dark green, cream and pink, ruffled.
•Large.

Hunter's High Country
•(11225) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble-double white frilled star/variable green edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, ruffled.
•Standard.

Hunter's Hog Wild
•(11226) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble blue ruffled star/pink and white fantasy.
•Variegated dark green, cream and pink, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Hunter's Kashmir
•(11227) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble lavender frilled pansy/ purple edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, ruffled. •Large.

Hunter's Lightning Strike
•(11228) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble blue frilled pansy/pink fantasy.
•Variegated medium-dark green and cream, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Hunter's Momma Jo
•(11229) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble lavender wavy pansy/purple band, white edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, ruffled.
•Large.

Hunter's Mother's Love
•(11230) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double pink ruffled pansy/white-green edge.
•Variegated dark green and white, quilted, serrated.
•Standard.

Hunter's Muy Grande
•(11231) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble wine star/pink fantasy.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted. •Large.

Hunter's Non-GMO
•(11232) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble pink frilled pansy/raspberry sparkle edge.
•Variegated dark green, cream and pink, quilted.
•Standard.

Hunter's Pink Camo
•(11233) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double white pansy/pink eye, rays.
•Medium green, pointed. •Semiminiature.

Hunter's Remember When
•(11234) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble-double blush pansy/white-green edge.
•Variegated dark green and white, quilted.
•Standard.

Hunter's Rut Crazed
•(11235) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble blue wavy star/white and pink fantasy.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, serrated.
•Large.

Hunter's Sky Busting
•(11236) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double chimera pink frilled star/lavender stripe.
•Variegated medium green and white, pointed.
•Standard.

Hunter's Slippery When Wet
•(11237) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double light pink frilled pansy/darker eye, white-green edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, serrated.
•Standard.

Hunter's Smoke on the Water
•(11238) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Double blue star/raspberry band, white edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted.
•Standard.

Hunter's Storm Clouds
•(11239) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble-double white pansy/blue eye.
•Medium green, plain. •Semiminiature.

Hunter's Sweet Emotion
•(11240) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble lavender pansy/purple edge.
•Variegated dark green, white and cream, quilted.
•Standard.

Hunter's Tranquility
•(11241) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble purple two-tone pansy/darker band, white edge.
•Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, serrated.
•Standard.

Hunter's Twilight Glow
•(11242) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble purple ruffled star/wine eye, variable white edge.
•Variegated medium green and white, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Hunter's Vixen
•(11243) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Single-semidouble coral-pink pansy.
•Dark green, pointed. •Semiminiature.

Hunter's Whitetail Fawn
•(11244) 07/17/2019 •K. Muzalewski
•Semidouble-double white and blue pansy/darker eye.
•Medium green, pointed. •Miniature.

How to Grow African Violets Under 4-Foot T8 LED Tubes: Part 2

By Ronn Nadeau • St. Louis, Missouri • Email: avseeds@yahoo.com

Part 1 of this article (in *AVM*, July/August 2019) describes work showing that African violets grow best when receiving light on their foliage at intensities in the range of 3000 to 3500 lux. Also, in Part 1, I used a light meter to compare light intensities produced by three potential sources for growing African violets, and the results are summarized in the table.

The table shows huge quantitative differences in the light intensities and power usages of fluorescent lights compared to LED technologies. However, 4-foot tube fixtures, or shop lights, are designed to light rooms and garages, not plants from a distance of 10 to 12 inches. To take advantage of LED efficiency, growers must dim them so they produce 3000 to 3500 lux on the foliage of plants 10 inches below. Electronically dimmable T8 tube systems can be assembled, but are significantly more expensive than the method described here. See more on dimmable LEDs near the end of this article.

Discussing Results

During the two months since the Part 1 article appeared, I have corresponded with 14 people who had questions and ideas. This led to significant changes in my advice on how to use 4-foot T8 LED tubes over African violets. The biggest change is that I now recommend using two T8 LED tubes per fixture instead of just one. Also, the tubes are different; they are frosted Parmida brand tubes instead of clear tubes from Hyperikon.

The Parmida tubes have an outer coating that lessens and diffuses the light and makes the tubes look like fluorescent tubes. However, they still are too bright to use only 10 inches above African violet foliage.

Testing the New Tubes

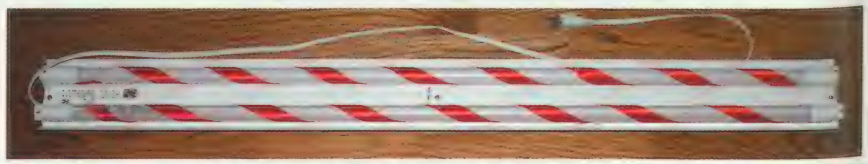
The photo below helps to explain my current method. Before applying the ribbon, the Parmida tubes in the fixture showed, when lit, 6200 lux under my standard conditions. That changed to 5545 lux when one of the tubes was twisted 180 degrees in its sockets, so that the tube's LED elements pointed up at the reflector instead of down toward the light detector. Finally, when both tubes were wrapped with nine twists of red ribbon, as in the photo, the setup produced 3220 lux, which was just what I wanted.

If you would like to use T8 LEDs and are interested in trying what is presented here, get the items listed below or similar ones. With your light meter, determine the lux your plants currently receive under one of your fixtures/tubes. Next, remove the fixture and replace its tubes with two Parmida (or Parmida type) LED tubes that have been wrapped with ribbon, and twist one of the tubes 180 degrees, as above. Re-install the altered tubes/fixture at the same height over the plants as before. Measure the lux and see if it is acceptable (3000 to 3500 lux). If it is not acceptable, adjust it by adding or subtracting ribbon from one or both tubes. For more adjustments, use your imagination.

Light Intensities (LUX) and Energy Used by 4-foot 2-Tube Lighting Sources

Source	Lux*	Energy Used (watts)
T12 Fluorescent	3500-2800, weakens with age	80
T8 Fluorescent	4900-4000, weakens with age	64
LED	5400-9500, varies by type and tube material	36

***At 10 inches below the centers of the tubes.**



One-inch wide red ribbon helped dim the tubes to an acceptable lux.

An electrical engineer, Paul Vaillancourt, emailed saying he made three dimmable T8 LED 4-foot lights for his wife, Lynda. His fixtures are rewired fluorescent fixtures. His tubes are Toggled brand, D416-50321-2 dimmable, 5000K daylight (about $18 each), and his dimmers are Lutron SELV-300P-WH Skylark electronic low-voltage single-pole dimmers (about $53 each). Paul ordered this particular dimmer (from Amazon) as a result of a telephone conversation with a representative at Toggled (the light bulb maker). This is the dimmer they recommend as being most compatible with their dimmable bulbs.

I purchased everything used in my study, except the fixtures, on Amazon. My light meter is a Dr Meter LX1330B, ($33). The Parmida brand tubes are T8 LED light tube, 4-foot, 18W, 5000K, frosted covering, dual-end (uses 20 watts) or single-end (uses 18 watts) powered. They work with or without a ballast, (about $116 for a 20/pack, $5.80 per tube). The red ribbon in the photo is Topenca Supplies brand, 1-inch wide, 50 yards (about $16).

The fixture in the photo used to be an Intertech T12 fluorescent fixture. I converted it to a Nadeau T8 LED fixture by rewiring it to remove the ballast. There is a video on my website on how to do the conversion (NadeausAfricanVioletSeeds.com). I will answer all questions by email. Thank you for reading.

Best Light Intensity for African Violets Is 3000 to 3500 Lux

By Ronn Nadeau with Lynda Vaillancourt

In my articles on light for African violets I state, based on my light meter measurements, that good light intensity on the foliage of African violets is in the range of 3000 to 3500 lux. However, if you search "light lux African violets," on Google, you will see only "10,000 to 12,000 lux" as the answer to that question. Here is an example:

"... the correct luminosity for African violets is 10,000 to 12,000 lux, or about 900 to 1100 foot candles."

That's all that is said on the subject and there is no reference to a source.

A reader, Lynda Vaillancourt, whose husband, Paul, is mentioned in the article that accompanies this one, emailed to comment about that discrepancy and how it originated. I answered that I didn't know where the high lux numbers came from, but I was sure that 3000 to 3500 lux is correct. Lynda was interested enough to search further in the African violet literature and was rewarded! She found the answers on pages 38 to 39 of Montague Free's classic book on African violets, *All About African Violets* 1951 edition. Lynda pointed to the following statements in that book. Free wrote:

Lynda was interested enough to search further in the African violet literature ...

"Richard F. Stinson, who holds the research fellowship established by the African Violet Society at Ohio State University, reporting at the 1951 Convention, indicated that when plants are grown under only artificial illumination, best results were obtained by using 40-watt

"white" or "daylight" fluorescent lights furnishing 300 foot candles when installed 11 inches above the pot rims."

One foot-candle is 10.764 lux (the international unit accepted for light measurement), so 300 foot-candles is 3230 lux. That intensity is in the middle of my recommended range of 3000 to 3500 lux as best light for African violets!

Still searching to determine from where "10,000 to 12,000 lux" came, we noticed Free wrote on page 39: *"Now it seems that on the basis of experimental work (unfinished at the time of writing), carried out by Richard F. Stinson, that between 900 and 1,100 foot-candles (readings taken at twelve noon) is the most desirable light intensity for growth and bloom under* ***greenhouse conditions****."* (bolding added by Nadeau). I don't know a reason for this discrepancy in light levels or why the greenhouse requirements would be so much higher.

Please contact Ronn Nadeau with questions and comments about this article (AVSEEDS@Yahoo.com).

What Is Amazon Smile?

We always encourage AVSA members to support our commercial members and *AVM* advertisers for African violet plants and supplies. But maybe not everyone on your holiday gift list is a grower (and yet you still are close ...).

Did you know that when you shop on Amazon — for nearly anything — you can support AVSA? When members shop on Amazon Smile, the company donates 0.5 percent of the total from all eligible purchases to AVSA once you select AVSA as your recipient. The percentage might not seem like a lot, but it adds up.

Here's how: Instead of typing in amazon.com on your phone, tablet or computer, type smile.amazon.com. On your first visit there, the site will ask you which charitable organization you want to support. Type in *The African Violet Society of America Inc.* to find AVSA on a list and select it. All else, such as your Prime membership and Amazon user name and password, remain the same whether you shop on Amazon Smile or the regular site. You even can check periodically to see how much money you've contributed through your purchases.

... the company donates 0.5 percent of the total from all eligible purchases to AVSA ...

This is such a great way to support AVSA without spending more of your money. You can bookmark smile.amazon.com or save it as a favorite to make it easy to return to it the next time you need a book, socks, or maybe the perfect holiday gift!

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Hunter's Hot Lips

Exhibited by: Ken Muzalewski
Hybridized by: K. Muzalewski
Semiminiature

Contest Entry —

Pesticides: Understanding the Available Tools

By Bill Chaney La Pine, Oregon

All us who love African violets and their relatives fear pests that sometimes find their way to our plants. Fortunately, we have some very good tools to both prevent and manage these problems, but their use can be confusing. I was inspired to write this after reading a Facebook post in which someone wanted to know if there wasn't some spray that "would just take care of all the pests." Boy, if only there was.

The post shows that many people do not have a good understanding of pesticides. I think it would be good if we started to think of pesticides like we think of prescription medicines for people. None of us would take our blood pressure pills to cure a sinus infection. Similarly, we should not reach for the Immunox if we have thrips on our plants!

Integrated Pest Management

Pesticides simply are tools that are part of a comprehensive IPM (integrated pest management) program that includes prevention, detection and treatment. I cannot stress enough the importance of prevention: **isolate all new plant material, always!**

I hope none of you ever need a pesticide. But even the most diligent among us might find that the enemy has breached our defenses and found its way to our collection at some point. Detecting the problem early can mean the difference between success in controlling it—or losing plants.

About Pesticides

Pesticide is a general term that refers to many types of products. Insecticides kill insects; miticides kill mites; fungicides control plant diseases caused by fungi; bactericides control diseases caused by bacteria (some rots); and herbicides control plants. They all are pesticides. Each of the products within a given type work on some, but usually not all, of the pests in their target group. This is even truer as we move from older, highly toxic pesticides to newer, safer and more selective ones. Some pesticides, especially some of the fungicides, work best at prevention. Some are systemic, meaning they move throughout the plant and can be applied to the soil to control pests on the leaves. Other products work by contact only and must be sprayed directly on the target pests.

> ... it would be good if we started to think of pesticides like we think of prescription medicines for people.

All these factors make it important to choose the correct product for each problem. It also is important to handle each product carefully and dispose of it properly to avoid contaminating our environment. Even if fellow growers have shared instructions on using a given product, please read the label so you can understand what you are using and never use products at rates higher than suggested. You can damage plants from using too much of any of these products. Further, it is a violation of the law to use a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its label.

Since most of these newer pesticides are very expensive, many growers turn to purchasing smaller quantities online. It is great to make these products available to the average grower, but the products sometimes arrive with an incomplete (or no) label. Always seek the label online and be sure you are using the product correctly. Measure the products carefully.

Using too much can damage your plants and will not work better. I use a small syringe to measure liquids accurately and a postal scale to measure dry products by weight.

Common Pesticides

Let's consider some of the most common pesticides that many growers are using. This is by no means a complete list, nor is it meant as an endorsement of any of these products; it simply is background information to help you make good decisions and use the products correctly and safely.

Marathon. This is a granular formulation of imidacloprid. It is very systemic and is effective against mealybugs and aphids. The same active ingredient is available widely in many other products, many of them from Bayer. If you choose to use a different product with the same active ingredient, be sure you understand the concentration and correct way to use it. Imidacloprid is more effective as a preventive product than a curative one and many growers use it in their potting mix at all times to avoid mealies. It can be applied safely to indoor plants, but this product is highly toxic to bees and other pollinators and should not be used on outdoor blooming plants.

Forbid. This is an effective miticide. The active ingredient is spiromesifen. Unlike imidacloprid, it is not systemic and must come in contact with the mites. This is a problem because many mites hide deep in crevices of the plants, making contact difficult. It also should be used at the correct concentration to avoid plant injury. Mites can be one of the hardest pests to control and can spread quickly—often without detection—until populations are very high, unless you are extremely diligent in your monitoring program.

Conserve. The insecticide is effective against thrips. The active ingredient is spinosad. It is only mildly systemic at best and must be applied to the foliage as a spray. Since thrips like to feed and hide inside blooms, which are impossible to completely cover with spray, it is absolutely necessary to disbud in combination with this spray to control thrips infestations. Also, because thrips are not susceptible to spinosad in the prepupal and pupal stages, more than one application is necessary. The correct interval between sprays is critical to success: too short an interval and some pupae might not have hatched; too long between and some new thrips might already have entered the prepupal stage.

> ... healthy plants better resist pests and diseases than ones that are struggling.

Avid. This is an insecticide and miticide with the active ingredient abamectin. It most often is used for African violets as a miticide for cyclamen and broad mites, but it also can control aphids and whiteflies. Avid primarily is a contact material and is used by some growers as a dip for mite-infested plants. Use this carefully and follow label directions.

Immunox. The fungicide has the active ingredient myclobutanil. It is effective against powdery mildew. It is a contact material and must be sprayed on all foliage. Immunox will both kill mildew and prevent new infections. But since it works by contact, it does not protect new leaves that grow after spraying, and if the conditions still are right for mildew, repeated applications might be necessary.

Physan 20. This product is used by growers mostly as an algicide in water reservoirs, but also is an effective fungicide and bactericide and can control many plant viruses. Because of its broad spectrum of activity, Physan also is used widely as a disinfectant for tools, benches and pots. Its advantage over bleach is largely one of speed and stability, since bleach solutions lose effectiveness rather quickly, especially when organic material is present. Physan 20 also can be used to treat some plant diseases. Be aware, however, that use of this product will kill mycorrhizae in the soil, and these are a part of several popular soil mixes.

Other products. There are other products that are used by some growers; many of them are natural products such as neem oil, turmeric or insecticidal soaps. I would caution, however, that all these products, though natural, can harm plants if used at too high a concentration or sprayed on delicate plants.

Like people taking medication, each plant has a different tolerance to treatments. It has been my experience that these more "natural" products can be effective, but often produce less consistent results.

Keep Plants Healthy

We also should be aware that healthy plants better resist pests and diseases than ones that are struggling. Like our plants, pesticides can be very sensitive to the pH of water. A good rule of thumb is that if the water is too alkaline or acidic for plants, it is not suitable for mixing with your spray solution.

Some pesticides have a long shelf life, and some do not. Pay attention to temperature and humidity in the area where you store your pesticides. Always store pesticides in an area that keeps them away from children (and sometimes well-meaning spouses). Do not store your pesticides in an area that freezes or is too hot.

I would again like to stress the importance of prevention rather than cure in growing healthy plants and enjoying them. It is important to routinely monitor and examine our plants closely for pests, so that if any infestation or infection occurs, we can isolate and deal with it quickly. We have great tools for dealing with most of the pests of our plants, but we should know which one to use and how to use it effectively in each situation. If you are not sure, ask! There are always knowledgeable people out there more than willing to help.

Editor's note: Bill is an African violet grower and a retired entomologist.

AVSA Booster Fund

By Dianna Walston Kokomo, Indiana

Donations received from July 10 through August 15, 2019 Total: $420

Geneva — $100-$499
Bill and Marge Farrand, Ann Arbor, MI

Multicolor — $50-$99
Carol Hixenbaugh, Green Cove Springs, FL
In memory of Shirley Peck
Linda Scott, Albuquerque, NM
Margaret Siirilia, Vista, CA
Peggy Smith, Canal Winchester, OH
Columbus AVS

Two-Tone — $25-$49
JoEllen Bowden, Albuquerque, NM
Karla Ross, Conroe, TX
Spring Branch AVC
Jill Stern, Deer Park, NY

Thumbprint — Under $25
Betty Branson, Sellersville, PA
Linda Garramone, Bay Shore, NY
Brent T. Johnson, Columbus, OH
Caroline Storey, San Marcos, TX
Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta, Hong Kong

AVSA Brand Marks

By Joyce Stork, AVSA Marketing Committee

The Board of Directors voted to adopt new AVSA brand marks at their annual meeting in Houston, Texas, in May 2019. These brand marks already have been visible in AVSA email banners and will be increasingly visible in other digital platforms.

Marketing AVSA effectively in the Internet world requires very small but distinct images. The AVSA seal, which has become so familiar, will not be discarded, but will be avoided in digital environments where the seal detail blurs and becomes unreadable.

The two images seen here are part of the AVSA branded assets now in use. The mark of a sun rising over a mountainside was inspired by the 1892 discovery of Saintpaulia in the mountains of Tanzania. The font used is deliberately simple to reduce into the tiniest of spaces. One example might be the corner of a photo shared in Pinterest, where it must be legible even on a small mobile phone screen.

The mark of a sun rising over a mountainside was inspired by the 1892 discovery of Saintpaulia in the mountains of Tanzania.

Many versions of these two basic images are included in the branded assets. The full name of the society will be used when the audience wouldn't recognize the AVSA acronym. The abbreviated initials will be used especially in member communication. The colors might be reversed for a more dramatic effect. Alternate color options currently are not offered. Unique ver-sions of the brand mark soon will be available for both Commercial Members and Affiliates to use in their advertising and digital sites.

AVSA is grateful to Douglas Brull, graphic artist, retired professor emeritus, and AVSA member for his donation of the AVSA brand marks. The value is hard to assess, but many believe it would have cost in excess of $50,000 if the work had been hired. Douglas continues to assist as the need develops for specialized applications of the AVSA brand marks.

AVM Article Contest

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

How excited I was when I found out following the 2019 AVSA Convention in Houston that I was tied with Paul Kroll for second place in the *AVM* article contest.

Pat Hancock called me after she returned from the AVSA convention in Houston to inform me that she and several others would be sending me leaves. For two weeks it was like Christmas, with priority packages arriving and the excitement of opening them up to see what the hybridizers sent me.

I attended the Gesneriad Society Convention in Cincinnati during the week of July 4th, and found out that another package would arrive while I was at convention. So, I had to instruct my husband to open the package, take out the leaves and place them in juice glasses with a bit of water to cover the end of the leaf stem. He did a great job and the leaves were healthy when I got home.

Jay Sespico and Linda Hall brought their prize contributions with them to the convention, so I even continued to receive gifts while there. Then, in late July, to my surprise I got an email message saying that another package was coming with more leaves. I couldn't believe I got this wonderful collection of plant material for coming in second place.

Along with Jay and Linda, I would like to thank the following hybridizers for participating in the contest and supporting AVSA: Linda Abplanalp (Carolina), Joan Baker (Rivermist), Steve Covolo (Steffano's), Carol Eros (Morgan's), Pat Hancock (Buckeye), Kathy Hajner (K's) and Ken Muzalewski (Hunter's). How wonderful it will be to grow their plants and share them, since many are not grown in the northeast area of the United States where I live.

I hope all the magazine's readers will be inspired to write an article.

I think the contest was a great idea because it has inspired many great articles for the *AVM*. I hope all the magazine's readers will be inspired to write an article. It doesn't have to be long, and I'm sure many of you have a tip to share, or would like to talk about a favorite tool, fertilizer, soil mix or method you use to grow your plants. After all, who would have thought writing about dirty perlite would make me a contest winner.

Article Contest Update

By Pat Hancock

Congratulations to the winner of the September/October *AVM* article contest. **Dr. Minh Bui** of Rockville, Maryland, won for his article "Buffalo, Houston and Beyond," which appeared on page 42 of the September issue. He will receive a new chimera crown and is entered in the end-of-year contest for leaves and other prizes.

We've got some great entries in this issue, and I look forward to seeing which article Sue Hoffmann and her judging panel select. Here are upcoming issue deadlines and prompts to get you started writing:

January/February 2020 issue
Deadline November 1
We would love to see some articles about hybridizing. If you hybridize, how did you get started? What advice to you have for hobby growers transitioning into hybridizing? What are some challenges and tips for success? What are the basics (both cultural and practical) for getting started?

As always, we love articles on basic and advanced care of African violets. The winner will receive a leaf of a new introduction.

March/April 2020 issue
Deadline January 1
Growing vintage African violets. What do you love about the vintage varieties? Do you have trouble finding vintage violets? Do you or a local club member have an outstanding collection of vintage varieties? If so, maybe you can describe them and send photos.

Since this issue falls just as we all plan for spring shows (and the national one!), we also would love to see some tips on grooming, growing for show, transporting plants, etc. The winner for this issue will receive a vintage violet — Lasswell's Girl Friday (1970).

Be sure to mark your article "Contest Entry" and send it to the editor by the issue's deadline.

Special thanks to all who entered and to our team of judges.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

Please send articles for the AVM to the editor (editor@avsa.org).

Contest Entry —

Learn from the Best

By Conna Clark Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Some of the most useful information I've received on growing has come from other members of my local club. We might be busy around a table, chatting as we work, mulling over plants at shows that we attend or listening to club members' thoughtful presentations at meetings. A kindly aside will seize my attention and I'll think "hmmm … that's a good idea. I'll try that!"

I owe my friend "S.," one of the most dedicated growers I know, for much enlightenment. For instance, I mentioned that I had been putting small amounts of Physan in my reservoir water to control algae. She said, "I put a few drops of food coloring in the water of my reservoirs. It does the same thing and doesn't affect the plants." That's a tip that I'd never seen published and oh, how right she was. It works!

S. also mentioned, while we all were potting plantlets for a sale, that she doesn't water her plantlets after potting them. She pots her plantlets into slightly moist potting mix. Then, she puts the plantlets in a humidity dome and waters them by misting the interior of the dome cover only. That moisture is enough to sustain the plantlets while they get started without causing them to rot.

Wicking Tongues

K., who sweeps the awards at our club show each year, taught us all how to make little tongues of wicking materials to rest on our reservoir lids and extend down into the reservoir water. An even uptake of water to the plants seems to help to keep the plants from getting soggy and keeling over. It's a good device to use if you are, like me, chronically heavy-handed with the watering can!

See photos of the method on this page. Ideally, the slice that you cut from the lid should be as narrow as possible while still permitting the tongue of wicking material to pass into the reservoir. Broader cuts make the lids prone to buckling from the weight of the plant on them. It's also possible to double up on the lids. Two lids can be better than one for supporting a heavy plant.

My local club member's valued tip for watering: cut off a narrow slice of the reservoir's lid (top) and place wicking material through it to the water below to rest under the plant on the lid (bottom).

I use capillary matting that I order from Charley's Greenhouse Supply, although I'm told that many people use cut-up acrylic blankets from big-box stores as capillary mats. Any synthetic material is suitable, just not cotton or wool.

Potting Tips

J. mused to me in passing that, in her opinion, plantlets left without necessary up-potting for too long will miss their moment and won't make show plants. I credit J.'s thoughtful observations with making me more conscious of each plant as an individual. She has great appreciation for what each plant wants. J. has taught me to think of my plants as individuals and that my work with them is a conversation, not a set of instructions.

With a flick of her fingers, B. showed me that I bury my plants too deeply when potting—and with a light tap, she demonstrated that I shouldn't be afraid to pat down the potting mix a little bit. I still sometimes bury my plant necks too deeply, but at least I know to correct myself now.

Fellow Growers

C. is fascinated with the backstory of plants; I credit her with making me aware that knowing who hybridized a plant and how the plant should look at its best will help me grow better plants. Her curiosity has helped me to pay attention to each plant's place among its peers.

> It's a good device to use if you are, like me, chronically heavy-handed with the watering can!

Now, I'm not shy about online learning. I thank all the excellent growers who have solved my problems and increased my skills in online forums and in the *African Violet Magazine*. Some of what I learned from my friends might even be widely published. But the act of drawing my attention to the solution to a question in the moment is the act of a friend and is made all the more valuable by the friend's presence.

Tips and Techniques: Those Marvelous Minis

By Mary Corondan

Editor's Note: These tips are excerpts from Mary's presentation at the 2017 MAAVS convention in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Containers and Leaves

I use Solo cups and wick with nylon fish twine. Leaves are started in these cups and placed in a terrarium environment to root. I use a mixture of one-half perlite and one-half vermiculite as a top dressing for rooting leaves. When the babies are ready to pot up, I place them in individual solo cups. They are watered with 2 tablespoons of (Maestro-Gro) Sea Mist per quart of water. Babies are potted in a 2 1/8-inch squatty pot and covered with a sandwich bag or placed in a terrarium for a week or two. In three months, I pot them up into a 2-1/4-inch pot or Solo cup.

Grooming

Ideally, each plant should be examined and groomed weekly. I use support rings (either the commercial type or Styrofoam rings cut from disposable plates) to train and protect foliage. Grooming for show begins 12 weeks prior to the show with repotting.

Contest Entry —

Grooming Guidelines for Novice Growers

By Geraldine Silva Springerville, Arizona

African violets will benefit from regular grooming. It helps plants to be more vigorous, more pleasing to the eye, more symmetrical and healthier. They also probably will bloom better with regular grooming. However, grooming can be a difficult task for novice growers because they are afraid to do something wrong. It takes time to learn what to do when grooming African violets. With a few pointers, you can learn how to groom.

Some aspects of grooming are a personal choice. The way I groom might seem drastic to another grower. More experienced growers want a plant with no damaged leaves; others can live with plants that have leaves with some imperfections. In time, you will learn to do it your way. For the novice African violet grower, I offer these guidelines for grooming that you can evaluate to determine what needs to be done.

Faded or dried blooms. Remove.

Damaged leaves. Those leaves with cuts, nicks, tears, spots, cracks, brown tips or a chewed-on appearance probably should be removed (crickets will chew on African violet leaves). Place a section of toilet tissue over the leaf you might remove to see how it will affect symmetry. There might be a gap after removing damaged leaves. You can gently move a leaf, a little at a time, by holding it in place with a coffee stirrer or something similar. In a week, try to move it a little more and repeat.

Immature leaves. These are leaves under the bottom row of leaves that are smaller, have skinnier stems, are lighter colored, look weak or less well developed, and often have a more rounded shape. There usually are three of these immature leaves.

Old leaves. These leaves are paler in color than the rest of the leaves, bleached by too much sunlight or turned yellow. If removing old leaves creates a gap, follow the steps above for damaged leaves.

Some aspects of grooming are a personal choice.

Twisted, overlapped, deformed or dead leaves. The first two of these do nothing to enhance a plant and might never be trained to grow correctly, so remove them. Sometimes, two leaves will grow together, like Siamese twins. Take a photo if you want to keep a record of this kind of rare event, and then remove, because these leaves will destroy symmetry. When leaves overlap, one of them does not get enough light and space, so remove one of the leaves, choosing the one that is smaller or has an imperfection. Deformed leaves are distracting, so just remove them. Also remove dead leaves.

Dried bloom stalks. They are unsightly, so remove them.

Seed pods. Violets make seed pods at times. (This might mean you have insects called thrips. "Flick" the center of the blossom. If you see a tiny yellowish insect crawling there, you must remove all blossoms on this plant to get rid of them or they will infest all your violets.) If you want to plant the seeds later, just let the pod dry thoroughly before removing it.

Dust, soil particles or pet hair. These block light and air. To clean a violet, tilt the violet slightly and hold under a gentle stream of warm water. Be sure to blot the center leaves and put the plant out of direct sunlight. You can clean leaves with a soft make-up

brush or natural bristle brush if you choose not to "shower" them, but they like the moisture from a shower and will look better.

Necks. A neck is the part of the stem that is left after removing several leaves. Repot before the neck is one-half inch long. Don't let it grow like a palm tree!

Suckers. A sucker is a small plant that grows on a mature violet, usually at the base of a violet or between leaves. If you want another plant, then leave it on until it is big enough to remove safely, or just discard it because it will push the nearby leaves out of shape and you will not have good symmetry. A sucker also takes strength away from the rest of the plant, so remove it as soon as possible.

Petiole stubs. This is the part of the bloom stalk that is left after you remove a dead stalk.

Extra leaves. Any leaf that spoils the symmetry should be removed. Remove any leaf that is smaller than the one above it.

After you have practiced each of the listed grooming tips, you will feel more comfortable grooming your African violets. It is suggested that you start your grooming practice on plants you are comfortable using as test plants, not on your prized African violets.

Now that you know what to look for, groom your violets regularly. And remember, you can choose to remove something or not, so relax and groom.

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

N-Neitiri

Exhibited by: Mary Corondan
Hybridized by: N. Berdnikova
Miniature

Answers 'bout Violets

By Richard Nicholas Denton, TX

Email: pastpresident@avsa.org

Once upon a time our *AVM* carried a Q&A column. Interest waned, but from time to time, we still get questions. So, I will use this space every so often to respond to questions from members and readers. I won't call it a column, but an "answer" article—as needed. Let me know what you think. Better yet, send your questions or topics you would like to see discussed in the magazine to me, our editor, or both of us.

First things first: I have been growing violets and a few other gesneriads for a long time—a really long time when I think about it. I have entered a lot of shows and won some nice awards. I am a Master Judge. But, none of that makes my ego think I have all the answers! So, I will share what I have learned, often the hard way; there are few mistakes I have not made. Fortunately, I have many violet friends, so I will call on some really wonderful growers to help with answers.

Question: What do members do when receiving a new leaf? Do they soak it in diluted bleach or spray with an insecticide? Do they isolate? If so, for how long?

Sue sent in this series of questions—and some more for later. A new leaf can be exciting—a new variety for the collection, but caution is still a good idea. A leaf cannot bring all the bad things associated with a new plant since there is no soil, root ball, etc. However, a leaf, even from a trusted source, can carry mildew spores, critter eggs and microscopic mites.

I do isolate new leaves just as I would a new plant, usually for three months or more. This isolation is easy and often allows new babies to be up before I bring the leaf out. I wash and rinse with a mild insecticidal soap and lukewarm water leaves that I bring in from group sources like club sales. I know of growers who spray with a general wide-spectrum contact spray, such as Dual Action Rose and Flower Insect Killer by Bayer.

You can apply such caution to your own leaves in a few cases. If you put down a leaf to "save" a troubled plant, take precautions to prevent more troubled plants. If you think a new leaf needs more severe actions than I have described, you probably should not accept it. Better safe than sorry.

I do isolate new leaves just as I would a new plant, usually for three months or more.

Question: Do members spray with Forbid 4F, or Avid or??

Forbid 4F is probably the most powerful miticide available to us. I know growers who use it. It is expensive and truly must be used according to directions and with caution. Avid also is a reliable miticide, although it apparently does not kill the eggs, so multiple sprays are needed. Avid also will kill thrips on contact. Avid also is expensive. Clubs sometime buy a bottle and share to reduce the cost. Both Forbid 4F and Avid sometimes can be found for sale on sites like eBay in smaller containers. Use only a very small amount per spraying. I have used Avid as a preventive spray with no damage to the plants.

This question brings up the matter of a pest management program of regular preventive spraying. Maybe that can be the next article? Comments and new questions are welcome.

And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: secondvp@avsa.org

■ **Annapolis Valley AVS, Nova Scotia — Winners:**
•Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Ottawa, Jolly Glory, Rob's Scooter; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Scooter, **Karen Campbell.**
•2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Bashful Baby, Mac's Freckle-faced Redhead; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia eumorpha* 'Saltao', **Valerie Despres.**
•Best in Show/Best Species: S. 5i clone *velutinus* lite, **Debra Carey.**
•Best Standard: Mag's Lovely Rainbow; Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Anne Brown.**
•Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Patti Vaison.**

■ **Tidewater AVS, VA— Winners:**
•Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rumba Red, Optimara Modesty, Optimara Seurat; Best Species Collection: S. 5h clone *velutina*, S. 5b clone *grotei* Mather V, S. 5b clone *confusa* Mather E; Best in Show/Best Standard: Rumba Red; Best Miniature: N-Snezhnyi Georgin; Best Trailer; Rob's Boolaroo; Best Species: S. 5b clone *grotei* Mather V; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Knight.**
•Best Semiminiature: Jolly Butterfly, **Terry Jordan.**
•Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Betty', **LaDonna Hopson.**
•Best Design, **Norma Griswold.**

Corrections for Columbus AVS, OH as reported in the September/October issue.

■ **Columbus AVS, OH — Winners:**
•Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Falling Stars', **John deSaavedra.**
•Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Nancy Carr.**

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The African Violet Society of America

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Contest Entry —

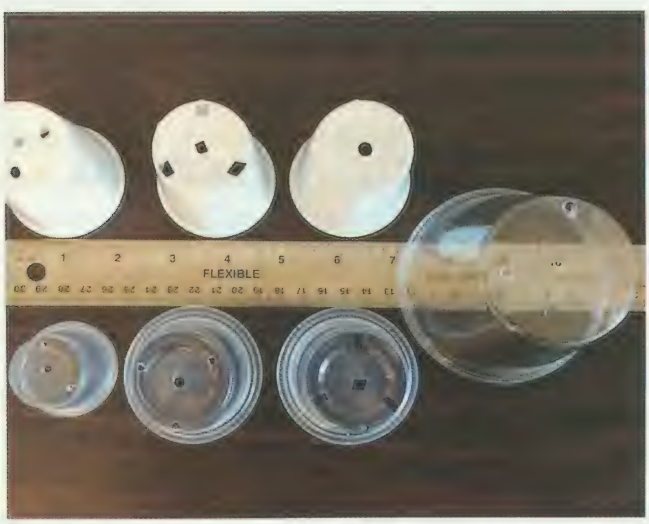
Pots – The Whole Picture

By Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama

In a previous article on containers, I discussed the different types of plastic cups for African violets. Now, I will take a closer look at aeration of those containers. One of the primary requirements of growing African violets is adequate air to the roots. A light, fluffy mix is important, and perlite will help maintain proper air spaces among the roots. When wick watering, this becomes critical, but what about aeration of the pots themselves? Nearly all pots, except for some decorative glazed containers, have holes. Some have a few and others have many holes. How do you add more holes if the situation warrants it?

Types of Pots

Growers rarely use clay and ceramic pots because they are heavier, breakable and more expensive than plastic containers. If you must use them, make sure the container has sufficient drainage. If you need to make holes, you risk breaking the pot, but a masonry drill bit can be helpful. Make sure you have a block of scrap lumber underneath the pot and ensure proper ventilation. Wearing a dust mask and goggles also is a good idea.



Three-ounce Solo cups with holes made by (from left to right) a drill, knife, and melting.

> Remember that the plastic at the edge of the 3-ounce cups is thinner than at the center.

Plastic pots come in many shapes and sizes, but to lower the cost further many growers reuse old, appropriately sized food containers by washing them and making drainage holes. Moreover, plastic Solo cups come in handy sizes. The 3-ounce plastic Solo cups on which many of us rely can have holes punched several different ways. The easiest way is to cut holes in the bottom with a sharp knife. Some growers use a surgical blade and others an X-Acto knife. This method is best if you just need to prepare a few pots and don't have any set aside. Cleaning up the plastic pieces is easier if you cut holding the pots over some newspaper.

Hole-making Methods for Plastic Pots

A fast method is to use a soldering iron to melt holes in the plastic. I have done this in the past but the downsides are the pungent fumes from the plastic, the residue sticking to the soldering iron, and making only one pot at a time. Make sure you have excellent ventilation (preferably outdoors) and goggles might be a good idea too. Wear gloves to protect your hand from any misses with the iron. Have a stand for the iron on which it can cool. I made a stand using a block of scrap wood and a metal bracket.

A third method for punching holes in plastic cups relies on a cordless drill. Put down newspaper and a block of scrap lumber. The plastic is so thin in some of the cups that they will tear. A good technique is to stack four or five pots together (fewer with larger ones) and drill all the drainage holes at once. A few repetitions with a 5/32-inch bit is a good compromise. If you use one that is too small, the filings will clog the holes quickly as you drill. Conversely, if the bit is too large, you risk tearing the plastic. I used a paper towel to brush away the plastic filings, but any cloth rag or small brush also would work. Again, goggles can help keep the dust out of your eyes when you clean off the cordless drill.

The benefit to drilling is that it is faster than cutting with a knife and doesn't produce toxic fumes like a soldering iron does. Depending on your growing conditions, you might want to drill fewer holes or more holes. I make three holes at the edges and one in the center, which is good for wick watering. Some growers make only a single hole for the wick, but that becomes problematic if the hole is filled with roots, algae or mineral salts. If you have holes at the corners, there will still be a way for water to drain out when you need to leach the soil.

In conclusion, experiment with different sizes of drill bits until you find the size that meets your needs. Remember that the plastic at the edge of the 3-ounce cups is thinner than at the center. You will get better results if your holes are in the recessed center disk. Best wishes in growing your violets.

Comparing Methods for Punching Holes in Plastic Containers

Method	Pros	Cons
Knife	Good for a few	Slow, can't stack
Soldering Iron	Fast	Fumes, can't stack
Power Drill	Very fast and stackable	Can rip thin plastic

Bottom row: 1-ounce condiment cup, 2.5-ounce cups with holes made by drill and knife, and 9-ounce punch cup with drilled holes.

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received from July through August 2019 Total $202

Multicolor — $50-$99
AVS of Philadelphia
In lieu of speaker's fee for Paula Bal
Columbus AVS (OH)

Two-tone — $25-$49
Spring Branch AVC
AVS of Springfield (PA)

Thumbprint — Under $25
John Hesselberth
Brent T. Johnson
Sarah Leonhard
Caroline Storey
Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Jolly Frills

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature

In Memory

Shirley L. Peck

Mrs. Shirley L. Peck passed away at the age of 73 on Tuesday, February 5, 2019, having been a beloved member of The Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society since October 4, 2011. Growing violets requires nurturing, and her ability to multiply beautiful plants with beautiful friendships made her time with us very precious. Most recently, she was HJAVS Secretary and in charge of inventory and supplies.

Shirley was a valuable member who never shied from hard work and knew how to make all of it fun. During meetings, newcomers especially would linger at the supply table for her patient explanation of best practices and to hear the latest joke from Shirley's husband Dave. Each year at the club's AVSA show and sale, she entered impressive horticultural specimens, but perhaps most importantly served as cashier. Shirley was particularly memorable to attendees and many joined the Heart of Jacksonville as a result of her conversation and invitation to join, followed by a home visit and growing support.

She often organized especially lively club socials that kept people talking for months afterward, and those gatherings cemented lasting friendships within the group. Kind, sweet and genuine, Shirley's smile was even more lovely than her flowers, and never will be forgotten.

Fred Grafelman

By Gary R. Beck: Fred Grafelman became active in the world of African violets in the 1980s and I met him when he joined the African Violet Society of San Francisco. He was immediately drawn to positions in Ways and Means and the Plant Sale Table at three shows per year in which the society participated at the time. Fred grew large plants but they were properly full of gorgeous flowers. These entries earned him Best-in-Show awards on too many occasions to count. He also was a big promoter of the Western African violets.

Fred became a Judge, working himself up to Senior Judge. He shied away from higher offices, although he was roundly liked in the Northern California area. His wife, Judy, was by his side constantly and assisted the society in other ways. Their daughter Jennifer helped at the monthly Ways and Means table selling bags of soils, fertilizers, rings and chemicals.

Fred was the self-appointed chauffeur for escorting members to various functions, including the annual Christmas Party, which he usually arranged. If there were a way to make someone happy, he would find it. His joyous energy was contagious to everyone who came upon him.

He will be sorely missed by his family and countless African violet friends from all over the world.

Arkansas: Natural Beauty—and Talent!

By Danny Tidwell Little Rock, Arkansas

Arkansas, "The Natural State," is well known for its abundant natural beauty, but we also have an abundance of talent among native Arkansans. They include athletes, authors, musicians, singers, songwriters and so many more. You will recognize some in the list below right away, and many probably surprise you.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe

Born March 20, 1915, in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, Sister Rosetta Tharpe was an American singer, songwriter, guitarist and recording artist. She attained popularity in the 1930s and 1940s with her gospel recordings, which had a unique mixture of spiritual lyrics and rhythmic accompaniment. She was the first great recording star of gospel music who appealed to rhythm and blues and rock and roll audiences and influenced early rock and roll musicians Little Richard, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2018.

Johnny Cash

John R. "Johnny" Cash was an American singer-songwriter, guitarist, actor and author. He is one of the best-selling musicians of all time, selling more than 90 million records worldwide. Although remembered mostly as a country music icon, his sound embraced rock and roll, rockabilly, blues, folk and gospel. This crossover appeal won Cash the rare honor of being inducted into the Country Music, Rock and Roll, and Gospel Music halls of fame. He was born in Kingsland, Arkansas, on February 26, 1932.

Glen Campbell

Glen Travis Campbell was born in Billstown, Arkansas, on April 22, 1936. He was an American singer, guitarist, songwriter, television host and actor. He was best known for several hit songs in the 1960s and 1970s, and for hosting a music and comedy variety show on CBS from 1969 until 1972. He released more than 70 albums in a career that spanned five decades, selling more than 45 million records worldwide, including 12 gold albums, four platinum albums and one double-platinum album.

Dizzy Dean

Jay Hanna "Dizzy" Dean, also known as Jerome Herman Dean, was an American professional baseball pitcher. During his Major League Baseball career, he played for the St. Louis Cardinals, Chicago Cubs and St. Louis Browns. Dean had a brash and colorful personality, and is the last National League pitcher to win 30 games in one season. After his playing career, "Ol' Diz" became a popular television sports commentator. Dean was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1953. Dean was born January 16, 1910, in Lucas, Arkansas.

Bear Bryant

Paul William "Bear" Bryant was an American college football player and coach. He was best known as the head coach of the University of Alabama football team. During his 25-year tenure as Alabama's head coach, he amassed six national championships and 13 conference championships. Upon his retirement in 1982, he held the record for the most wins as a head coach in collegiate football history. Bryant was born September 11, 1913, in Kingsland, Arkansas.

This is just a sampling of the famous people from The Natural State; singer Charlie Rich, actor Billy Bob Thornton, author John Grisham, and actress Mary Steenburgen also hail from Arkansas.

We also have some talented African violet growers and designers who are looking forward to displaying those talents as "Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas" May 24 to 31, 2020.

Hosted by the Central Arkansas African Violet Society

WELCOME TO ARKANSAS!!!

African Violet Society of America
74th Annual Convention & Show
"Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas"
May 24–31, 2020

Show & Salesrooms Open To The Public
Friday May 29, 9am–5pm / Saturday May 30, 9am–3pm

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Hunter's Antique

Exhibited by: Ken Muzalewski
Hybridized by: K. Muzalewski
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Galiwinku

Exhibited by: Sue Melson
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature Trailer
From 2019 2nd Best AVSA
Mini/Semimini Collection

Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Rob's Humpty Doo

Exhibited by: Sue Melson
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature Trailer
From 2019 2nd Best AVSA
Mini/Semimini Collection

Contest Entry —

Questions I Asked on Social Media

By Mary Thompson Paso Robles, California

I've written a couple of articles for *African Violet Magazine* but coming up with a subject that has not been covered already can be hard. I don't know whether this has been addressed, but I thought it would be interesting to ask three questions on social media and see what transpired.

I posted the three questions and gathered the responses after 48 hours. I posted them first on our club's Facebook page (Central Coast African Violet Society). We have 231 members from around the world. Even though this is our club's site, only five of our 11 members are on the page. Three people responded, and no one from our local club answered the questions.

After this limited participation, I posted the questions on another, very popular Facebook page with 6,100 members, many of whom are AVSA members, growers and hybridizers. Here is what I found:

AVSA Membership

Question No. 1 asked, "Are you a member of AVSA? If not, why?" This question received the most responses. Most people said, "yes," but some of the responses where surprising. I was happy that AVSA President, Sue Ramser, got in on the action and responded to some of them.

A common reason was "too expensive." I can see that some people might find this a deterrent. I don't consider $35 expensive, but we all have our priorities. Other responses included:

- No, but I will join tomorrow; requirement of my local club.
- Yes, it does more than just the magazine.
- The magazine is good; it is hard to balance all the interests of the members, but I think they do a good job.
- I also belong to other plant societies, and this is a good one in comparison to some others.

This response was funny and sad at the same time: "I was, but my magazines kept getting stolen in the mail. One actually arrived late with coffee stains and dirt inside! If they offered them for digital download, I would probably rejoin." Sue Ramser asked if the person posting had asked for a replacement copy. The response was, "Yes, and they replaced them, but I did not renew and contribute free magazines to a thief costing AVSA money and when they kept one for a month and it showed up dirty and used, close to my last issue, I decided not to reward/encourage the continuation of theft."

Several people requested a digital magazine, and they were informed that this option is being worked on.

"I also belong to other plant societies, and this is a good one in comparison to some others."

AVSA Convention

Question No. 2 asked, "If you have been to an AVSA convention, please tell me why you go." We all have our reasons for going to the convention. The number one reason in the Facebook responses was to see the entry plants. That was followed by purchasing new plants/supplies, and to meet people or renew friendships. Other reasons included curiosity, see new varieties, see displays, attend

classes/presentations, take photos and enter plants.

Question No. 3 asked, "If you never have been to an AVSA convention, why? Would you like to go?" The answers to this question were not surprising; distance and money are the main reasons people have not attended a convention.

I am thrilled that AVSA has started to promote the convention early this year. I usually wait impatiently until the beginning of the year, when they post the schedule. I convinced Renee Wilson several years ago to go to the Nashville convention, and to arrive a few days early to see the sights. We had so much fun, we have started doing that regularly. This year, after the convention, another cousin came with us and we went to Avery Island on our way to New Orleans. Next year, we also will make a family cemetery trip in Arkansas.

See you in Little Rock!

Tips and Techniques: About pH

By Sandra Skalski

The subject of pH can be confusing. The pH scale is a measure of acidity and alkalinity that ranges from 1 to 14, with 7 being neutral. Vinegar and lemon juice have a pH of about 3 (acidic). Bleach has a pH of about 13 (alkaline). The proper pH allows the plant to chemically use the nutrients in fertilizer and potting mix. If the pH is outside of the ideal range, the plant will not be able to use the fertilizer components even though they are present.

In general, African violets should do well with a pH of 6 to 7, which is slightly acidic. However, the pH of the potting mix is not the only consideration. Your water supply also has a pH, and it can vary with the time of year. During the summer months, the pH might be higher since the water company adds more chlorine. Even fertilizers affect pH. To complicate things further, over time, the peat moss will degrade and become more acidic. This is why plants that have not been repotted for a long time will start to have pale or yellow outer leaves. If you haven't repotted a plant in a year or more, the potting mix can be quite acidic.

As a new grower, do you need to worry about any of this? The good news is, probably not. I grew healthy violets for years without knowing or caring about the pH of my potting mix. If you repot about twice per year, you should not see many pH-related problems. However, if your plants develop pale outer leaves, hard, brittle foliage or tight centers, pH can be a potential problem to investigate.

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Optimara Little Omaha

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Semiminiature

African Violet Word Find

By Josh McKinney

E R N B U J G W K H E L D V T S U U K C
D J W J N W T X T B E T G P T E Y B Y G
I E Z Y U L T M G C X Y L A C Y L T R I
A I L U A P T N I A S T M V A R J O U D
Q S L P P I V D E T S E C R T I G A I Q
M R E W E V E A D M N T H A O U L N F V
I S O D M P M E T V A X W A R Z N T A M
L X G V G P E O K A X L U N F B G H E T
Y D K N A F O X P R Q Z I J L R G E L T
P E T A L R U L Q N T V B F Y P I R J C
E P D W E N Y N M I D O A A P A G C R P
L P E T I O L E G I B H X R D L Y O A T
C I W Y E B W N Z G V I V E D C W D A N
N E H U K F Y R M X F B B K H N A X U S
U M X D X G R S N O L O R C F Q A T W X
D M U U N B U N E L L O P U O L U P N S
E V B L F L S E E D R V T S W I F T S N
P R K Z J A M D L I U Z Z P P B L M M C
Q H C J T D H E W X Z X S Y P A P O X W
A Q E E C E R M G D V E O G Y U E F T V

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- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
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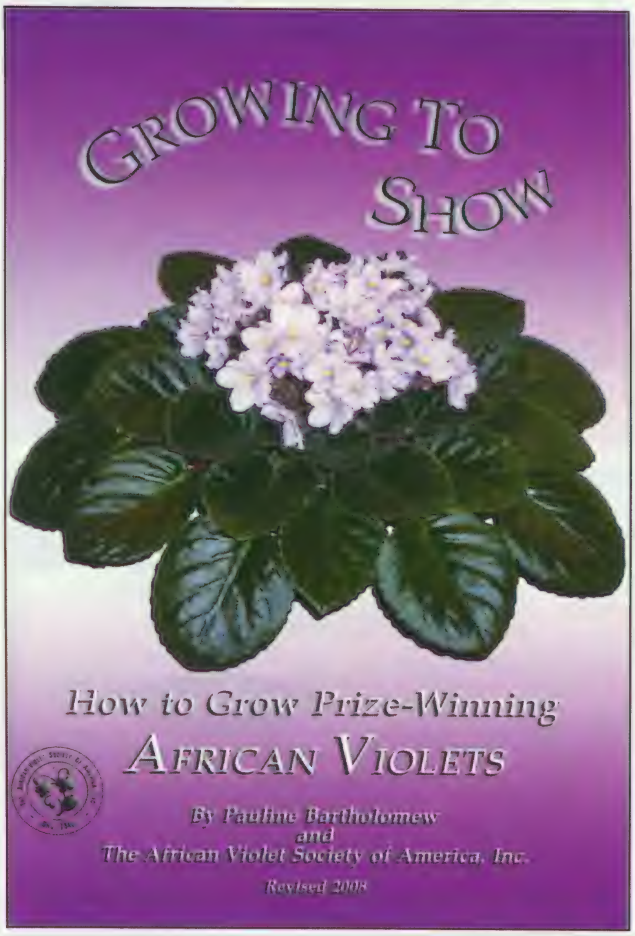

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